

Doctor WHO

A LIFE OF CRIME BY MATT FITTON

THE DOCTOR: SYLVESTER McCOY

Time and space traveller

ACE: SOPHIE ALDRED

Travelling companion

MEL: BONNIE LANGFORD

Ex-travelling companion

LEFTY LONNIGAN (M, 50s)/SPEROVORE BANKER:

(SLIGHT FX) Retired old-school criminal planning one last job.
Partly cybernetic./(FX) Alien money-lender

GLORIA (F):

Ice-cool, calculating, glamorous accountant

ATOMON/STEWARD:

(FX) Sperovore: quantum-reality-devouring, money-lending
parasite, slimy and many-limbed/Air steward (1 scene)

NATHAN LATER (M, 20s):

Undercover cop (actually a younger version of Lefty)

MAYOR/SPEROVORE AUDITOR/SPEROVORE FINANCIER:

Native Ricostan, raccoon-like. Corrupt Mayor of 'Costa del
Crime' retirement planet/(FX) Alien money-lenders.

**OTHERS: SECRETARY (5 scenes); WILDTRACK RICOSTANS, THUGS,
POLICE, GUARDS, VOICES IN LEFTY'S DREAMSCAPE, SPEROVORES (FX).**

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PART ONE

SCENE 1: INT. INSIDE CASKET

VERY ENCLOSED SPACE — THE DOCTOR IS LOCKED INSIDE A LINED AND MUFFLED COFFIN.

DOCTOR:

(GASP, SUDDENLY WAKING) Ace! (BEAT) Where are you?

(BEAT) Where am I, for that matter. (EFFORT, TRIES TO MOVE)

Very tight. Definitely not the TARDIS, then. Not much room for manoeuvre. (TRIES AGAIN, BUT CAN'T MOVE) In fact, I can't seem to move at all..

MUFFLED SCRAPING OUTSIDE BOX AS IT'S CARRIED AWAY.

DOCTOR:

(TENTATIVE) Hello? Where are you taking me?

SCENE 2: EXT. BEACHSIDE TERRACE

WAVES LAPPING AND SEABIRDS CALLING IN DISTANCE. FUNERAL MUSIC PLAYS FROM INSIDE CHAPEL OF REST. MOURNERS EXIT DOWN STEPS ONTO TERRACE, AS GLORIA STANDS BIDDING FAREWELL.

GLORIA:

(TO DEPARTING MOURNERS) Thank you for coming. Goodbye. Thank you.

MAYOR:

(EXITING CHAPEL) A very tasteful service. Just what he'd have wanted.

GLORIA:

Nice to get a chance to say goodbye. It was all so sudden.
(SNIFFS, FEIGNING UPSET)

MAYOR:

(UNCOMFORTABLE) My sincere condolences, Miss Swannicker. Your... associate was one of our most... colourful guests.

GLORIA:

Thank you, Mr Mayor. There's five hundred grotzits in the collection tray for... you know.

MAYOR:

Very kind, Madam. Very kind.

GLORIA:

If you'll excuse me. Now everyone's gone, I'd like a moment alone with the departed.

MAYOR:

Of course.

GLORIA WALKS UP STEPS INTO CHAPEL OF REST. WE FOLLOW MAYOR WALKING OFF ALONG BEACH. HOVERBIKE PULLS UP.

MAYOR:

(CALLING) Hey! You there! You need a permit to ride those on the beach.

MEL:

(CALLING, OFF) Who says?

MAYOR:

I do.

MEL TURNS OFF ENGINE AND CLIMBS OFF. SHE STARTS WALKING OVER.

MEL:

And who are you to tell people what they can and can't do?

MAYOR:

I, young woman, am the Mayor of Ricosta. As such, fully versed in all bye-laws, regulations, fines and the enforcement thereof.

MEL:

(ARRIVING) Give me a break. I've only just arrived on the planet. (HANDING OVER A WAD OF CASH) Here. Will fifty credits cover it? It's all I've got.

MAYOR:

(COUNTING MONEY) I may be able to overlook this matter for now. A new arrival? Might I enquire as to the nature of any business you intend to transact here?

MEL:

I'm looking for a Mr Lonnigan.

MAYOR:

You'll find him inside the Chapel of Rest.

MEL:

Chapel of Rest?

MAYOR:

Along the terrace. Up the steps. The rather grand marble archway.

MEL:

I suppose it must be. (HEADING OFF) Thanks.

SCENE 3: INT. CHAPEL OF REST

GLORIA'S HEELS CLICK ACROSS MARBLE HALL.

GLORIA:

That's it? Everyone's gone?

NATHAN:

Yeah. Pretty good turnout all in all.

GLORIA:

What would you know, Mr Later? You're still wet behind the ears.

NATHAN:

Well. It's the kind of crowd I'd be happy with at my funeral.

GLORIA:

Let's hope that's a long way off. (PATTING CASKET LID) Now you, the dear departed. You're going on a long journey.

GLORIA PRESSES BUTTON, WHICH STARTS CONVEYOR BELT MOVING.

GLORIA:

There it goes. All the way down to Ricosta's incineration and burials department. Or whatever else they want to do with the bodies.

NATHAN:

(URGENT) Gloria, can we talk about-

GLORIA:

Not now, Nathan. Get the hoverboat ready. I'm still hoping one more guest turns up.

NATHAN:

All right. (HEADS TOWARDS DOORS) I guess it can wait till we're on the island.

AS NATHAN REACHES EXIT, MEL ENTERS.

NATHAN:

(CALLING BACK) Actually, that guest might be here!

MEL:

(AT ENTRANCE) Mr Lonnigan?

NATHAN:

No. (EXITING) You should go on through.

MEL WALKS THROUGH CHAPEL TOWARDS GLORIA.

MEL:

(APPROACHING) Hello? I'm looking for Lefty Lonnigan.

GLORIA:

Sorry, darling. You just missed him.

MEL:

We were supposed to have a rendezvous. Organised by a mutual friend of ours. I think I might be a bit late.

GLORIA:

No. I'm afraid he is. The 'late' Lefty Lonnigan.

MEL:

Oh. I see. Chapel of Rest. Sorry I missed him.

GLORIA:

We've all just said our fond farewells. Sent the coffin on its way to the hereafter. (WALKS OVER) And you are Miss Melanie Bush. Late to the funeral.

MEL:

How do you know who I am? Who are you?

GLORIA:

I know lots of things. And the answer to your other question is... complicated. Come out to the beach. I've got transport laid on.

SCENE 4: INT. MAYOR'S OFFICES

MAYOR HURRIES INTO OFFICES.

MAYOR:

Secretary Valla!

SECRETARY HURRIES UP.

SECRETARY:

Yes sir?

MAYOR:

Put these in my safe, please.

HAND OVER BAGS OF CHINKING COINS.

SECRETARY:

Yes, sir.

MAYOR:

And these.

FLIPS THROUGH WADS OF NOTES AND HANDS THEM OVER.

MAYOR:

Cold hard cash has its advantages. But it takes a while to filter through the system.

SECRETARY:

Indeed, sir.

MAYOR:

Prepare tax receipts for Miss Swannicker and the other donors. We require all charitable contributions to be on record. Above board and beyond reproach. That's how we like to keep things.

SECRETARY:

Of course, sir. How was the funeral?

MAYOR:

So sad when we lose another of our long-standing – and most spendthrift – residents. Remind me, I need to work out the death duties and interment charges. (GOING INTO OFFICE) To pass on to the Lonnigan estate.

MAYOR GOES OFF INTO OFFICE. RIFLES PAPERS ON DESK.

MAYOR:

(OFF, IN OFFICE) What are these?

SECRETARY:

(CALLING) Messages. From S.I. Holdings.

MAYOR:

(OFF) There are dozens of them.

PHONE RINGS. MAYOR RUSHES BACK TO HIS DOOR.

MAYOR:

Don't answer th-

SECRETARY:

(ANSWERING PHONE) Ricosta Administration.

MAYOR:

Don't tell them I'm-

SECRETARY:

(TO PHONE) The Mayor's just walked in. He's in his office. Shall I put you through?

MAYOR:

Who is it? As if I didn't know...

SECRETARY:

Isn't that funny? We were just talking about them. S.I. Holdings. I'll put them through for you now, sir.

MAYOR:

(NERVOUS GULP) If you must.

MAYOR WALKS BACK INTO OFFICE. DESKPHONE TRILLS. MAYOR SLAMS OFFICE DOOR.

SCENE 5: EXT. HOVERBOAT

HOVERBOAT MOTORING OVER LAPPING WAVES. SEABIRDS CRY. GLORIA WALKS ACROSS DECK AND PICKS UP A BOTTLE FROM ICE BUCKET.

GLORIA:

Funerals. Depressing things. Still, let's not dwell on the past. Here's to the future.

POP OF CORK, FIZZ AND CLINKING AS CHAMPAGNE POURED FROM BOTTLE INTO GLASSES.

GLORIA:

Gadalaxian champagne, Miss Bush?

MEL:

Not just now, thanks. It's a pity. I was hoping Mr Lonnigan would be able to help me.

GLORIA:

And why might you be needing help?

MEL:

Well, you see, I'm in rather a lot of trouble.

GLORIA:

Really? You don't look the type.

MEL:

You didn't say who you were.

NATHAN:

(CALLING, OFF AT HELM) Gloria! We're almost there!

MEL:

'Gloria'... who?

GLORIA:

(CALLING) Mr Later! I believe the correct expression is 'Secret Island Ahoy!' (TO MEL) He's the new boy. How did you get to Ricosta?

MEL:

My ship. The 'Nosferatu Three'. They impounded it at customs. I couldn't pay the landing tax.

GLORIA:

Of course. Though it's not your ship really, is it? It's the property of Mr Sabalom Glitz.

MEL:

You do know something, then? Maybe you can help me instead.

GLORIA:

Oh, I'm sure I can. Once we're safe on dry land.

HOVERBOAT ENGINES SLOW, THEN REV AS THEY PULL INTO DOCK. GLORIA GETS UP AND WALKS TO SIDE.

GLORIA:

Ready the ramp, Mr Later! We're going ashore!

CUT TO:

SCENE 6: EXT. SECRET ISLAND, DOCK

HOVERBOAT PULLS UP AT DOCK, THEN IDLES. HUM AS RAMP EXTENDS AND GLORIA AND MEL WALK ACROSS THROUGH FOLLOWING. DISTANT TROPICAL ISLAND CREATURES AND CHIRPING.

GLORIA:

This way, Mel! (WALKING) They go back a long, long way, dear old Lefty and your ship's owner. A mutual arrangement of investment and support. He bought this island with the proceeds from their Iceworld job.

MEL:

(FOLLOWING) Iceworld? Oh. That's where I met Glitz.

GLORIA:

I know. And Lefty had been following your career with interest, Melanie.

MEL:

Me? Then he must know we're in deep trouble. Glitz always said he could rely on Lefty Lonnigan if ever we got into a really tight corner. He told me all about the retirement villa on Ricosta. He was planning on joining him one day. I liked the sound of the place – beaches, pools, fabulous restaurants.

GLORIA:

My my, he has been quite an influence, hasn't he?

MEL:

But now we're in real dire straits, Glitz has vanished. I thought he might have come here?

GLORIA:

No. No sign of him. Not even at his best friend's funeral. Then again, 'honour among thieves' is a slippery commodity.

MEL:

Tell me about it! He's run out and left me owing a lot of money to some very unsavoury types.

THEY WALK ON ALONG A PATH. NATHAN HURRIES TO CATCH UP.

NATHAN:

Secret Island Ahoy, ladies.

GLORIA:

This is Nathan. Our pilot – among other things. He can show us the way inside.

MEL:

Impressive obelisk. What is it? Some kind of sculpture?

GLORIA:

Lefty always had a liking for abstract art. Didn't understand it. Just thought buying it made him look clever. Open it up will you, Nathan.

NATHAN:

Of course. Step this way.

NATHAN TAPS IN A CODE, ELECTRONIC HUM AND SCRAPING OF ROCK AS DOORS OPEN UP.

MEL:

Oh, it's not just a monument. It's a building.

GLORIA:

Nothing gets past you, does it, Melanie?

NATHAN:

What's the point of a secret island, if it doesn't have a secret hideaway? This way, Miss Bush.

THEY WALK INSIDE.

SCENE 7: INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE

MAYOR IS ON THE PHONE TO SPEROVORE.

MAYOR:

S. I. Holdings have been extremely generous. I am the first to admit-

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(FX, VIA PHONE) Some might say too generous. We expect a return on our investments.

MAYOR:

But as you know, the economy here is very finely balanced.

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(D) The scales are tipping away from your favour.

MAYOR:

I couldn't have known the grotzit index would fall so low. The Ricostan dollar is just going through a very bad patch.

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(D) We take financial responsibility very seriously. We had certain requirements when we offered the bail-out to your economy. Not all those requirements have been met.

MAYOR:

We should really have entered the common currency when we had the chance.

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(D) You cannot profit from decisions not taken.

MAYOR:

No. Of course. You would know all about that.

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(D) And we feel it is time we cut our losses - any further losses.

MAYOR:

We should have a new influx of residents very soon.

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(D) Applications have been falling year on year for the past decade.

MAYOR:

I know. I know. But those that do come bring great wealth. I am introducing a regime of taxation, but-

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(D) Soon there will be no-one left.

MAYOR:

Then there are the tourists-

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(D) Our uses for them are... limited. You know we require the bio-signatures of your permanent residents for the process.

MAYOR:

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I really am grateful that you stepped in to support us in Ricosta's hour of need. But I understood the investment strategy was always long-term-

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(D) That term is up.

MAYOR:

Please. A few more years-

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(D) We will see how the latest import tastes when our agent has prepared it. We are due in a board meeting. We always look forward to the menu on such occasions.

MAYOR:

I'm sure you'll find it very agreeable. One of our most colourful residents.

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(D) We will be in touch soon, with our final decision. Goodbye, Mr Mayor.

MAYOR:

A pleasure doing business. As always.

PUTS PHONE DOWN.

MAYOR:

(TERRIFIED) An absolute pleasure.

SCENE 8: INT. SECRET HIDEAWAY.

DOOR SLIDES OPEN INTO CONFERENCE ROOM. GLORIA AND MEL DESCEND LAST STEPS OUTSIDE AND ENTER.

GLORIA:

Sorry about all the steps, Mel.

MEL:

Not a problem.

DOOR SLIDES CLOSED BEHIND.

GLORIA:

This is what I wanted to show you.

MEL:

A conference room? Under an obelisk, on a tropical island.

GLORIA:

Sometimes, things are just what they appear to be. More of my associates will be joining us. But before all that, I should get you up to speed. With a little show and tell.

MEL:

'Show and tell'? What is this? School assembly? Listen, I don't mean to sound rude, but who are you?

GLORIA:

All will become abundantly clear to you very, very soon. (WALKS OVER TO CONTROLS) All right. So here is the show.

GLORIA PRESSES BUTTONS. A SHUTTER OPENS.

MEL:

(GASP) The TARDIS. But... that means...

GLORIA:

Yes.

MEL:

Is he here? Can I see him?

GLORIA:

You'd better sit down. This might come as a bit of a shock. You came here to see Lefty Lonnigan. And I'm showing you a TARDIS. Let me fill you in on how the two are connected...

MUSIC TRANSITION TO FLASHBACK THROUGH:

GLORIA:

(VOICEOVER) The first Mr Lonnigan knew of this box, was when he picked it up on the security cameras outside his villa on the mainland. One week ago..

SCENE 9: EXT. RICOSTAN VILLA GROUNDS

SEA LAPPING, OFF. TARDIS MATERIALISES UNDER FOLLOWING, THEN OPENS. DOCTOR AND ACE STEP OUT. SEA IN DISTANCE, SEA BIRDS, CALLING WAY OFF.

ACE:

Nice. Should have brought a bucket and spade.

DOCTOR:

I doubt we'll have time for sandcastles, Ace.

ACE:

No. Looks like we got here too late. Someone's already built a pretty impressive fortress.

DOCTOR:

Fortress. Luxury villa. One and the same on Ricosta.

ACE:

That's where we are, is it? Ricosta?

THEY START WALKING OVER SAND ONTO PAVED PATH UNDER FOLLOWING.

DOCTOR:

Yes. A retirement haven for a certain type of business person. Tropical climate. Untouched beaches. Fabulous cuisine. And no extradition treaties.

ACE:

Right. That type of business person.

DOCTOR:

I wonder why the TARDIS brought us here? She's normally quite select about who she mixes with.

ACE:

Then again, you did steal her in the first place.

DOCTOR:

There is that. Shall we take a look around?

MUSIC SEGUE TO:

SCENE 10: **EXT. OUTSIDE LEFTY'S VILLA**

ACE CLIMBING FENCE.

ACE:

(EFFORT, CALLING DOWN) Told you the fence wasn't electrified.

DOCTOR:

You take the high road and I'll take the...

SONIC SCREWDRIVER BUZZ. GATES CLANK OPEN.

DOCTOR:

... door.

ACE CLIMBS AND DROPS DOWN FROM FENCE BESIDE DOCTOR.

ACE:

Show-off.

DOCTOR:

Someone is living in the lap of luxury. Two pools. An outside sauna and hot tub. Balconies on every vista.

ACE:

Yeah, but we just walked straight in. You'd think the criminal mind would be thinking a little more about security.

LEFTY:

(OVER P.A SYSTEM) Oh, I think about it. A lot. Hold it right there, you two. My boys will come and get ya.

ROBOT SECURITY GUARDS CLANK TOWARDS THEM.

ACE:

(CLOSE) Android sentries. Reckon you can knock them out with some sonic swizzling?

DOCTOR:

(CLOSE) Let's keep that up our sleeves, shall we? Allow ourselves to be captured and taken straight to the top. Then we might discover who needs our help.

ACE:

(ALoud) So, who would live in a house like this? (CRIES OUT, GRABBED)

ROBOTS CLAMP THEM BOTH AND DRAG THEM OFF.

DOCTOR:

We're about to find out. (GRABBED BY ROBOTS) Ow. Careful with the elbow! I've only got the two! (SHORT MUSIC TRANSITION TO:)

SCENE 11: INT. LEFTY'S VILLA

ROBOT SECURITY GUARDS DRAG ACE AND DOCTOR INSIDE. LEFTY WALKS TOWARDS THEM — HALF HIS BODY IS CYBERNETIC, FOOTSTEPS ALTERNATES WITH ROBOTIC CLUNKS.

LEFTY:

So you're saying you broke into my house to see if I need any help?

DOCTOR:

In a roundabout way.

ACE:

Think of it as a complimentary security assessment. Well, now we've seen you're quite capable of looking after yourself, (EDGES TOWARD DOOR) we should probably just be on our- [way] (GRABBED BY SECURITY ROBOT) Ow!

DOCTOR:

I think they're insisting we stay.

ACE:

What are you anyway? Some kind of cyborg?

DOCTOR:

(WARNING) Ace! (TO LEFTY) I'm sorry about my friend. She has an enquiring mind.

LEFTY:

Don't tell me you've never heard of 'Lefty Lonnigan'.

DOCTOR:

We haven't, I'm afraid. (BEAT, REALISATION) Oh, I see. 'Lefty' because-

ACE:

It's only the left side of your body that's still human.

LEFTY:

(MENACING) Yeah.

LEFTY CLUNKS FORWARD AS NATHAN APPROACHES OPEN DOOR AND KNOCKS.

LEFTY:

What is it?

NATHAN:

Mr Lonnigan?

LEFTY:

Oh yeah. The new boy. Come in, why don't you. Norman, isn't it?

NATHAN:

(ENTERING) Nathan, sir. Nathan Later.

ACE:

(CLOSE) Doctor? I'm thinking now's the time to poke around up your sleeve...

DOCTOR FIDDLES INSIDE HIS JACKET.

DOCTOR:

(CLOSE) Already doing it, Ace.

LEFTY:

What should we do with these two, new boy?

NATHAN:

Well...

ACE:

Tell you what, while you're making your minds up-

SONIC SCREWDRIVER BUZZ. SENTRIES BEEP AND SPIN. SECURITY ALARMS TRIP.

ACE:

We'll just be outside! (RUNS)

DOCTOR:

(RUNNING) Getting some air! Goodbye!

ACE AND DOCTOR PUSH PAST NATHAN AND RUN OUT OF DOOR.

NATHAN:

Oof!

DOCTOR:

(RUNNING, OUTSIDE) Ace! This way!

CUT TO:

SCENE 12: **EXT. VILLA GROUNDS**

ALARMS BLARING. DOCTOR AND ACE RUNNING ALONG PATHS THROUGHOUT.

ACE:

Where's the TARDIS gone? It should be right outside the gate!

DOCTOR:

It seems Lefty's security droids may have acquired it.

ACE:

Once a thief, always a thief.

DOCTOR:

In which case, we need to go back inside and find it.

LOTS OF SECURITY ROBOTS START CLANKING TOWARDS THEM.

ACE:

I suppose we do. This way! There must be another way in. How many of those robot things are there?

DOCTOR:

Too many! Ace! Back around here!

THEY RUN OFF AGAIN.

SCENE 13: INT. LEFTY'S VILLA

NATHAN AT CONTROLS. MONITORS SHOW ACE AND DOCTOR RUNNING.

DOCTOR:

(ON-SCREEN, RUNNING IN DISTANCE) No. Not that way. This way!

ACE:

(ON-SCREEN, RUNNING IN DISTANCE) Right behind you.

RUNNING FOOTSTEPS AND PURSUING ROBOTS CONTINUE ON SCREENS UNDER FOLLOWING.

NATHAN:

They're outside.

LEFTY:

Then it's time to prove your mettle, new boy.

NATHAN:

We've got cameras on them. They won't get far.

LEFTY:

Good. They'd better not trample my azaleas.

NATHAN:

They're heading past the pools. I've managed to get all the sentries back online. And I think I've filtered out whatever signal came off that sonic weapon of his.

NATHAN PRESSES MORE SECURITY CONTROLS.

LEFTY:

Good. Very good. He can't play that trick again.

NATHAN:

No. And I'm bringing in the spares from the perimeter too.

LEFTY:

Nice tech skills. Where did we hire you from again?

NATHAN:

I've been freelancing. I heard you looked after your own, Mr Lonnigan. Just want to do my bit to help. Earn my keep.

LEFTY:

We've a job lined up that you could be a good fit for. I'll see what my associates think when they arrive.

NATHAN:

What kind of job?

LEFTY:

Let's deal with these visitors first.

NATHAN:

There. We've got them cornered. By the sauna terrace.

LEFTY:

Then let's bring 'em in.

CROSS TO:

SCENE 14: **EXT. VILLA GARDENS**

BUBBLING JACCUZZI B/G. DOCTOR AND ACE RUNNING TOWARD IT OVER WOODEN BOARDS. ROBOT SENTRIES CLOSING IN. DOCTOR STOPS.

ACE:

What are you doing? I don't think we've got time for a jacuzzi!

DOCTOR:

(STOPPING) Just a moment!

DOCTOR STARTS USING SONIC SCREWDRIVER. WATER BUBBLES MORE FURIOUSLY.

DOCTOR:

Steam, Ace! It should give you some cover! Let's abandon the villa for now. Get outside the grounds so we can catch our breath.

ACE:

Right. (RUNS)

ACE RUNS OFF TO FENCE AND STARTS CLIMBING. CLANKING SECURITY ROBOTS COME CLOSER AND WHIR IN CONFUSION.

ACE:

(CALLING) Come on then!

DOCTOR:

I can't. As soon as I move, the steam will disappear and the robots will head straight for you. Get back over the fence!

ACE:

(OFF) No, Doctor. I'm not leaving you.

DOCTOR:

Then come back quickly! With help. (CRIES OUT AS SENTRIES GRAB HIM)

SENTRIES GRAB THE DOCTOR. SONIC STOPS BUZZING. ACE DROPS OUTSIDE.

ACE:

I'll find whoever's in charge of this place! Don't worry Doctor. They can't do this! (RUNS OFF)

NATHAN:

(VIA P.A.) We got one at least. Bring him inside. The boss wants to have a word.

SCENE 15: **INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE**

ACE THUMPS MAYOR'S DESK. PAPERS GO FLYING.

ACE:

You've got to do something! You're supposed to be the Mayor!

MAYOR:

I, young lady, do not have to do anything.

ACE:

Don't you believe me? You must know there's a bunch of crooks living on your planet.

MAYOR GATHERS PAPERS TOGETHER AGAIN.

MAYOR:

It's not a question of whether I believe you. I'm quite certain that what you describe may well have happened.

ACE:

So? What are you gonna do about it?

MAYOR:

I? Um. Nothing.

ACE:

Nothing?

MAYOR:

Nothing.

ACE:

I'm gonna take this up a level then. Who's your boss, fur-face?

MAYOR:

Young woman, I am the Lord Mayor of Ricosta. The highest authority.

ACE:

(REALISATION) I get it. You're in their pocket. Of course. If this place is some 'Costa Del Crime' planet, then it stands to reason the authorities are in on the action. What's your cut?

MAYOR:

My 'cut'?

ACE:

You know. How much do the gangsters bung you to turn a blind eye? From the look of the villas out there, I'd say they're probably selling you short.

MAYOR:

I refute the accusation, young woman! I am extremely gratified that so many successful business men and women have seen fit to retire to Ricosta. Our economy reaps many benefits from such a diverse range of interests.

ACE:

You're raking it in and you don't want to rock the boat. Fair enough. I'll deal with it myself.

MAYOR:

Young woman!

ACE SUDDENLY REACHES ACROSS DESK AND GRABS MAYOR.

MAYOR:

(GRABBED) Urrk!

ACE:

(CLOSE, THREATENING) 'Young woman' me one more time, and you'll be wearing that bushy tail of yours as a snood.

MAYOR:

A... a... what?

ACE:

A 'snood'!

MAYOR:

K-kindly release me!

ACE:

Your back end's gonna feel a bit chillier. But, on the upside... you'll have invented the snood.

MAYOR:

Do not threaten me in my own office. (CALLING) Valla! Get Security!

ACE:

No need! I'm going. (PUSHING HIM AWAY)

ACE PUSHES THE MAYOR BACK IN HIS SEAT. THEN STORMS OUT, SLAMMING THE DOOR.

MAYOR:

What a disagreeable person!

SOUNDS OF SCUFFLE OUTSIDE AS ACE PUSHES PAST SECRETARY.

SECRETARY:

(OFF) Oof!

ACE:

(OFF) Don't bother trying to stop me!

SECRETARY:

(AT DOOR) Mr Mayor? What happened?

MAYOR:

If that young woman comes anywhere near these offices again...
arrest her!

SCENE 16: INT. LEFTY'S VILLA

LEFTY CLUNKS AROUND ROOM.

LEFTY:

What are we gonna do with you, then?

DOCTOR:

That's rather up to you. Isn't it time you told me? Why am I here?

LEFTY:

I haven't the foggiest who you are.

DOCTOR:

My Ship has been homing in on someone in need of our help. I thought it was someone female. Given you've got me tied up, at gunpoint, I'd hazard a guess that it's not you. (BEAT) Unless she's taking a more holistic view of things...

LEFTY:

Help? You seem more like a hindrance to me.

DOCTOR:

How quickly we've got to know one another.

LEFTY:

I'm busy. I don't have the patience for burglars. I'm waiting for some business partners to arrive on Ricosta. We've got a little job on.

DOCTOR:

I'm guessing it's nothing innocent. Like a bathroom extension?

LEFTY:

Anyway. Why would I – Lefty Lonnigan, the most successful career criminal this sector's ever known – why would I be asking some stranger for help?

DOCTOR:

I don't know. What happened, Mr Lonnigan? I mean, your prosthetics. The injuries must have been very severe.

LEFTY:

Things went wrong. On a job. I was lucky to end up in a state-of-the-art medi-facility. The Krytomp Bio-Infirmary. Out by Andromeda. In the Golden Dragon Nebula. Very swish. Do you know it?

DOCTOR:

I've heard of its work. Pioneering reconstructive surgery.

LEFTY:

Yeah, well. It's all a long time ago now.

DOCTOR:

The folly of youth, eh?

LEFTY:

What are you? Some kind of intergalactic missionary?

DOCTOR:

I've been called worse.

LEFTY:

Hang on. You call yourself 'The Doctor'?

DOCTOR:

Yes.

LEFTY:

And that blue box. You called it a ship.

DOCTOR:

Not just any ship. The TARDIS.

LEFTY:

(CHUCKLES) Of course. I'm being so flamin' slow! The old rascal. He can't make it along himself, so he arranges some specialist assistance. You did come here to help me!

DOCTOR:

Now I think I'm being slow, Mr Lonnigan.

LEFTY CLUNKS OVER TOWARDS DOCTOR.

LEFTY:

The Doctor. The TARDIS. Tell me you remember Ravolox? Iceworld? Vandor Prime? Tell me you remember my old mucker, Sabalom Glitz.

SCENE 17: INT. LEFTY'S VILLA

NIGHT-TIME CRICKETS CHIRPING. ACE SCRAMBLES OVER FENCE. THEN FREEZES.

ACE:

(EFFORT) (TO SELF, CLOSE) Three. Two. One. And...

A ROBOT SECURITY GUARD PASSES BELOW. ONCE IT MOVES OFF, ACE DROPS DOWN THE OTHER SIDE AND SCURRIES INTO UNDERGROWTH.

ACE:

(EFFORT) (TO SELF, CLOSE) That's the beauty of automated security. Runs like clockwork.

SHE SCRAMBLES IN BACKPACK.

ACE:

(TO SELF, CLOSE) Everything I need for a jailbreak. Right-

SUDDENLY SHE'S GRABBED FROM BEHIND BY NATHAN. HE PUTS A HAND OVER HER MOUTH.

ACE:

(STRUGGLING) Mmmph!

NATHAN:

(CLOSE) Shh. Now when I take my hand away, you're gonna keep shtum. 'Cos another's sentry due in about fifteen seconds.

ACE:

(AGREEING) Mm-hmm. (SHE'S UNMUFFLED) (WHISPER) You! I thought I might have got as far as the terrace before-

NATHAN:

I said shh!

ANOTHER SENTRY APPROACHES AND PASSES BY ON PATH.

ACE:

(WHISPER) What's it matter? Aren't you just going to hand me in to your boss?

NATHAN:

Am I? (BEAT, AS SENTRY GOES OFF) They're moving your friend.

ACE:

(CLOSE) You're his henchman. That's what you're supposed to do isn't it? Sound the alarm?

NATHAN:

(CLOSE) We're not all what we seem, are we? Now keep quiet and stay out of sight.

ACE:

(CLOSE) Hang on. What did you say? They're moving him? You mean the Doctor? Where?

VILLA DOORS OPEN. LEFTY AND HENCHMEN SHOVE 'DOCTOR' (REALLY GLORIA IN DISGUISE) OUT ONTO PORCH.

LEFTY:

(OFF, AT DOOR) Move it.

NATHAN:

(CLOSE) Here they come now. Stay down. Lefty owns an island a mile off the coast. I'd guess that's where he's going.

DOCTOR:

(MUFFLED, ACTUALLY A RECORDING) I object to this treatment.

SCUFFLING AT THE VILLA DOOR.

NATHAN:

(CLOSE) Oh no.

LEFTY:

(OFF, AT DOOR) Watch it! He's making a break for it!

'DOCTOR' STARTS RUNNING.

CROSS TO:

SCENE 18: **EXT. LEFTY'S VILLA TERRACE**

'DOCTOR' RUNS.

DOCTOR:

(OFF, ACTUALLY A RECORDING) I'm leaving! Now!

LEFTY:

Don't let him escape! Shoot him down!

ENERGY WEAPON BARRAGE FROM SENTRIES.

ACE:

(OFF, CALLING) Doctor!

NATHAN:

(GRABBING HER) No. You'll only run into the line of fire.

ENERGY WEAPON FIRES AND HITS 'DOCTOR' - 'HE' FALLS.

ACE:

No!

NATHAN:

He's down.

ACE:

No. He can't be.

NATHAN:

Run, Miss. There's a gap in the fence. (BEAT) I said run! Unless you want to be next.

ACE:

I can't go. Not now.

NATHAN:

Mr Lonnigan's just mown down your pal with lasers, I don't think you want to stick around.

ACE:

He's still alive. He is. You don't understand-

NATHAN:

I do! You've seen what kind of man Lefty is. You need to get out of here.

ACROSS PATH, LEFTY CLUNKS TOWARDS THE 'DOCTOR'.

LEFTY:

(OFF) Turn him over. Whoah. What's happening? His face... It's glowing!

ACE:

What. Oh. Oh no. It can't be-

'REGENERATION' FX BUILDS.

GLORIA:

(CRIES OUT, OFF)

LEFTY:

(OFF) Take a look at this, boys. Maybe he's worth something after all...

ACE:

(GETTING UP) Get away from him, you- (GRABBED BY NATHAN)

NATHAN:

(HOLDING ACE BACK) There's nothing you can do. Get away.

ACE:

But the Doctor. He's changing!

NATHAN:

You're no use to him dead! I'll make sure he's all right.

ACE:

He'll be alive, but confused...

NATHAN:

I'll find you. Now go!

ACE SCRAMBLES AWAY.

'REGENERATION' FX REACHES CLIMAX, INTO TRANSITION OUT OF FLASHBACK.

SCENE 19: INT. SECRET HIDEAWAY

TRANSITION BACK TO PRESENT. A MOMENT OF SILENCE.

MEL:

I don't understand. The Doctor was shot? But... he survived?

GLORIA:

His friend – your friend, Ace – saw him sit up afterwards. Well, I say 'him'...

MEL:

How badly hurt was he?

GLORIA:

Very badly. But he, ah, got better. In a flash. (BEAT) You're being a little slow here, Melanie...

MEL:

Oh. Oh, I do understand. I've seen it before. He can change. I mean really transform. Into a whole new-

GLORIA:

(INTERRUPTING) I know.

GLORIA PICKS UP DOCTOR'S THINGS – HAT, COAT, UMBRELLA.

MEL:

Wait a minute. Are those his things? That's his hat. His coat. His umbrella from the Warehouse...

GLORIA USES SONIC SCREWDRIVER.

MEL:

His... whatever-that-is.

GLORIA:

(ENJOYING MEL'S CONFUSION) Not things the Doctor would ever leave behind.

MEL:

I can't believe it. The Doctor was here!

GLORIA:

Ahem. Still is.

MEL:

What are you doing? Putting on his jacket, his hat... (SUDDEN THOUGHT) Oh! (DISMISSING IT) Surely not... (REALISATION) Ohhhhh!

SONIC SCREWDRIVER BUZZ.

GLORIA:

Hello Mel.

SCENE 20: INT. CASKET

MUFFLED CLUNKING OF CASKET BEING CARRIED ON CONVEYOR.

DOCTOR:

Hello? Is someone there?

CONVEYOR CLUNKS TO A HALT. WHIRRING AS SCREWS ARE UNFASTENED FROM LID.

DOCTOR:

I can't move... can't see... can't think... Please.

CASKET OPENS. OUTSIDE, PULSING WAVES AND GLOOPING, VISCOUS FLUID MOVING THROUGH TUBES. DOUBLE HEARTBEAT, VERY SLOW.

DOCTOR:

(GASPS) Wh- where am I?

SLITHERING TENTACLES OF ATOMON.

ATOMON:

(FX) Your life is over.

DOCTOR:

No. What happened? Who are you?

ATOMON:

(FX) You are ended. This is death. (LOW CHUCKLE CONTINUES UNDER)

DOCTOR:

No it can't be. Not like that. No!

HEARTBEAT PULSE OVERWHELMS HIM.

END OF PART ONE

PART TWO

REPRISE

PULSING WAVES AND GLOOPING, VISCOUS FLUID MOVING THROUGH TUBES. DOUBLE HEARTBEAT, VERY SLOW. SLITHERING TENTACLES OF ATOMON.

ATOMON:

(FX) Your life is over.

DOCTOR:

No. What happened? Who are you?

ATOMON:

(FX) You are ended. This is death. (LOW CHUCKLE CONTINUES UNDER)

DOCTOR:

No it can't be. Not like that. No!

HEARTBEAT PULSE OVERWHELMS HIM.

SCENE 21: INT. VAULT [CONTINUOUS]

DOUBLE-HEARTBEAT CONTINUES A FEW MORE BEATS.

DOCTOR:

Wait. I'm not really dead. Am I? Surely I'd be the first to know if I were.

ATOMON:

(FX) You are more... talkative than most. This I admit. But I can wait.

SCENE 22: INT. SECRET HIDEAWAY

MEL:

I can't quite believe it. You're the Doctor? But you're...

GLORIA:

What?

MEL:

Taller.

GLORIA:

(PRETENDING TO BE THE DOCTOR THROUGH THIS SCENE — SHE THINKS SHE'S GOT AWAY WITH IT) That's the lottery when I get a new body. You never know what you're in for next. I hoped you'd come, Melanie. My old friend. In my time of need.

MEL:

What about Ace? What happened to her? Where is she now?

GLORIA:

Locked up in a Ricostan jail cell. I think she was getting on the Mayor's nerves. She's safest there. I need your assistance to do what I came here to do.

MEL:

Which is what?

GLORIA:

An old acquaintance needed my help. And since when have I ever ignored a cry for help?

DOOR SLIDES OPEN.

MEL:

You mean... Glitz is here too?

CYBORG CLUNKING AS LEFTY ENTERS.

LEFTY:

No, but I would like to track down the old rogue.

MEL:

Who's that?

GLORIA:

Who you came here to meet. Who I came to meet. The late Mr Lefty Lonnigan.

LEFTY:

Nothing like being dead to take you off the security grid.

MEL:

You're not dead?

GLORIA:

I told you she was quick. You see, Mel, Mr Lonnigan and Mr Glitz planned this whole thing a very long time ago. Only I wasn't in on it. Not until now. When I realised they'd cause untold disaster and suffering if they messed it up.

MEL:

Sorry. This is all a little confusing.

LEFTY:

Shall we get on with it, Gloria? The gang's in the vehicle pound. Let's go. (CALLING) You lot! Shift that TARDIS too! Stick it on the container lorry.

LEFTY WALKS OFF INTO CORRIDOR. TARDIS IS PICKED UP BY MECHANICAL TRANSPORTS AND TAKEN AWAY.

MEL:

Er... Doctor?

GLORIA:

(COVERING) Mr Lonnigan feels more comfortable with 'Gloria'. Funny how people cope with change.

MEL:

(STARTING TO GET SUSPICIOUS) Yes, isn't it?

GLORIA LEADS OFF AFTER LEFTY.

GLORIA:

Come along, Mel. Meet the crew.

SCENE 23: INT. MAYOR' OFFICE

MAYOR TAPPING AT KEYS. USING ADDING MACHINE.

MAYOR:

(TO SELF) If I shift those funds across... we're expecting a return on the timeshare electro-tennis court any day now... (SIGHS, STOPS TYPING) No, no, no, it's still not enough!

INTERCOM BUZZ.

MAYOR:

What is it, Valla? I asked not to be disturbed.

SECRETARY:

(VIA INTERCOM) It's the prisoner, sir. The guards are complaining again.

MAYOR:

What's wrong this time?

SECRETARY:

(VIA INTERCOM) She's making a lot of noise. Disturbing the others. They want you to talk to her.

MAYOR:

(SIGHS) That's what I was afraid of...

SCENE 24: INT. SECRET HIDEAWAY, CORRIDOR

MEL AND GLORIA WALK ALONG CORRIDOR. LEFTY CLUNKS ALONG UP AHEAD.

GLORIA:

(WALKING) How are you doing, Mel?

MEL:

(WALKING, HEDGING HER BETS FOR NOW) It's a lot to take in...

LEFTY:

You gonna tell her the tricky bit now?

GLORIA:

All in good time, Lefty. Now, the first thing you need to know is that Ricosta is a criminal haven.

MEL:

I had worked that out. What with Glitz and Lefty, and all the-[other]

LEFTY:

(INTERRUPTS) No, but you're wrong. The real criminals are the Ricostans. Conniving little ferrets.

GLORIA:

I'd say they're more like raccoons...

LEFTY:

Whatever. They're the ones keeping hold of all the honest citizens' hard-earned dosh.

GLORIA:

This planet's native species has seized the opportunity to exploit and extort every penny they can from those who – through no fault of their own – have had to set up home on their paradise world. Have you seen the price of a mineral water?

MEL:

Oh. So the Ricostans are the criminals? They look so sweet.

LEFTY:

They're devious little crooks. The lot of 'em.

GLORIA:

You should know by now, Melanie. Never judge by appearances.

MEL:

(AS IF CONVINCING HERSELF) Yes, I should know, shouldn't I?

GLORIA:

(STILL THINKING SHE'S GETTING AWAY WITH THE ACT...) Good. I knew you'd see it our way. I've promised to help Mr Lonnigan here with his plans to redistribute all that hard-earned wealth.

MEL:

You're giving all the money back to its rightful owners.

GLORIA:

Well... I'm going to give it all to Mr Lonnigan initially. And then we can look at individual claims on a case-by-case basis.

MEL:

I see. And what's this snag you want me to help with?

GLORIA:

The TARDIS. I can't drive it. I've just, um... reincarnated.

MEL:

'Regenerated'.

GLORIA:

There's always some kind of mental trauma that follows. Isn't there?

MEL:

Yes, I remember the last time.

GLORIA:

It's just a case of bad timing. Which is ironic, what with me being a Time Lord.

LEFTY STOPS AND TAPS IN A DOORPAD KEYCODE.

LEFTY:

Here we are. That TARDIS of yours should be out here now. With all our other vehicles.

DOORS OPEN ONTO LARGE OUTSIDE SPACE. HOVERCAR AND TRANSPORTER VEHICLES BEING STARTED UP AND TESTED.

THUGS:

That's it!/ Start her up!/ Nice one!

MEL:

What is this?

GLORIA:

Not only does the secret island have a secret base. We've got a secret carpark too.

SCENE 25: INT. RICOSTAN JAILHOUSE

ACE HAMMERS ON DOORS.

ACE:

Let me out!

HOLOGRAM FIZZES INTO EXISTENCE.

MAYOR:

(SLIGHT DISTORT) Would you please stop doing that?

ACE:

What's that? A hologram? You too chicken to come in and talk to me in person?

MAYOR:

(D) I find this to be the safest form of interaction with the prison population.

ACE:

I won't shut up, you know. I've been locked in more cells than you've had hot dinners. And from the look of you, that's quite a few.

MAYOR:

(D) I'll ask again. Will you please be quiet?

ACE:

(PRETENDING TO CONSIDER) Errrrm. (BEAT) No.

ACE THUMPS DOOR AGAIN.

ACE:

(YELLING) Let me out!

MAYOR:

(D) It would be easier to have you 'disappeared'. But the late Mr Lonnigan's estate was insistent we kept you incarcerated.

ACE:

How very kind of them. Pity they weren't so considerate when they shot my mate!

MAYOR:

(D) As long as they are prepared to pay for your upkeep. Well, it helps fill the Ricostan coffers.

ACE:

Yeah, I'm sure old Lefty is generous to a fault!

MAYOR:

(D) Poor Mr Lonnigan. They think it was the stress from your attempted burglary that caused it, you know.

ACE:

You're not listening! How many time do I have to say it? That cyborg didn't die. My friend did. (BEAT) Well, kind of.

MAYOR:

(D) Then tell me, whose funeral have I just attended?

ACE:

Listen. I'm sorry if some old gangster popped his clogs. To be fair, he was only half there to begin with. I'm more worried about the Doctor. He'll be confused. In trouble. I've never seen him do it before, but I've looked it up.

MAYOR:

(D) Oh yes. This so-called 'regeneration' of yours. It all seems a little far-fetched.

ACE:

I'm not making this up! He needs me!

MAYOR:

(D) Please. Keep the noise down. Or we'll have to muzzle you.

HOLOGRAM FIZZES OFF. ACE BANGS DOORS AGAIN.

ACE:

Oi! Let me out!

SCENE 26: EXT. SECRET ISLAND VEHICLE POUND

MEL, GLORIA, AND LEFTY - CLUNKING - WALK ACROSS POUND. IN BACKGROUND, VARIOUS HOVER VEHICLES WARM UP.

LEFTY:

(CALLING) How's it looking, new boy?

NATHAN:

(JUST OFF) All fuelled up and ready to go, Mr Lonnigan.

MEL:

(DUBIOUS) So that's your plan, Doctor? Rob a bank and have me drive the getaway car.

GLORIA:

When you put it like that, it does sound a little...

MEL:

Mercenary.

GLORIA:

But it's what we do, Mel! Isn't it? Bring down dictators. Overthrow the corrupt.

MEL:

(REALLY SUSPICIOUS NOW, BUT HIDING IT) I suppose. Why use all these hovercars and transporters if you've got the TARDIS here?

NATHAN WALKS OVER.

NATHAN:

The idea is that these get us in. There's no chance of a precision landing with all the security they've got around the vault.

LEFTY:

We need to break in the old-fashioned way.

GLORIA PATS TARDIS.

GLORIA:

But we take the TARDIS with us. When we crack the vault, we carry it in. And then, we can carry everything - and I mean everything - out, in one go. With you flying it.

MEL:

You know, I came here in the first place because I'm in trouble. We owe a lot of money to some very dangerous aliens.

GLORIA:

We do this, you'll make enough to get them off your back. And we help Mr Lonnigan and his friends into the bargain.

MEL:

(ALARM BELLS – SHE'S SEEING THROUGH IT) You want me to drive the TARDIS. But-

LEFTY:

(INTERRUPTS) But what? When a mate asks me for help. I don't say 'but'. Glitz thought you were a do-er, girl. Not someone who looks for excuses.

MEL:

That's just it.

GLORIA:

Here. Take the TARDIS key. Have a look around the old place. I'll be in in a minute.

GLORIA HANDS MEL THE TARDIS KEY.

MEL:

I suppose it won't hurt to look.

MEL UNLOCKS TARDIS.

GLORIA:

(CALLING) Mr Later. It looks like we won't be needing that second option after all.

MEL:

I'll just be inside.

MEL ENTERS TARDIS.

NATHAN:

I'd best close it down then. I'll take the boat back. (WALKING OFF) Meet you over on the mainland.

LEFTY:

Do you think she's gonna do it? Looks to me like she'll need some convincing.

GLORIA:

And I can convince her.

SCENE 27: INT. TARDIS

TARDIS B/G HUM. MEL STEPS TOWARDS CONTROLS.

MEL:

(TO SELF) I remember this. It's been so long. Yet no time at all.

GLORIA ENTERS.

GLORIA:

Mel?

MEL:

(TESTING HER – MEL'S PRETTY MUCH CONVINCED IT'S A SHAM NOW) Do you remember what you said to me last time we were here?

GLORIA:

I... er. The memory's a bit fuzzy. I'm sure it'll all come back to me. In time.

MEL:

Days like crazy paving. I never thought I'd get to walk down that path again. But I always hoped I might. It's been a strange time. A girl from Pease Pottage, travelling the universe with a ne'er-do-well like Sabalom Glitz.

GLORIA:

I imagine that gives you quite a different perspective on things.

MEL:

You can say that again.

GLORIA:

Will you do it?

MEL:

(FROM NOW ON, MEL'S PRETENDING SHE'S BEEN CONVINCED) If you're asking me to do something, Doctor. Then I know it must be right. (BEAT) Of course. Of course I will.

GLORIA:

(BELIEVES SHE'S WON MEL ROUND) Mel! Welcome back!

THEY HUG.

SCENE 28: INT. VAULT

HEARTBEAT AND PULSING GLOOPING B/G. ATOMON SLITHERS OVER TO CASKET.

ATOMON:

(FX) You are still not ready. This is not right.

DOCTOR:

On that we agree.

ATOMON:

(FX) I can prepare you for the process, nonetheless. Flavour is all in the preparation. (EFFORT) You are not what I expected.

HEAVES DOCTOR OUT OF CASKET AND SUSPENDS HIM AMONG GLOOPING CABLES.

DOCTOR:

(GETTING LIFTED OUT) Whereas you are strangely familiar. All those tentacles. All those mouths. A buzzing in my follicles. I'm trying to place the species.

ATOMON:

(FX) I believed you were already familiar with my people.

DOCTOR IS SUSPENDED AMONG CABLES.

DOCTOR:

Ah. At last. Some feeling returning in my fingers and toes...

ATOMON:

(FX) I am Sperovore.

DOCTOR:

Of course. And I'm not dead. Am I?

SCENE 29: INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE

MAYOR IS TAPPING AT KEYBOARD, PINGING OF MESSAGES.

MAYOR:

Ten thousand from the Ricostan benevolent fund. My off-planet savings... (TAPPING KEYS) ... best left where they are for now.

PHONE TRILLS.

MAYOR:

(ANSWERING) Ah. Thank you for calling back. Yes, I'm looking at realising as many assets as possible. And liquidating them into my personal account- (BREAKS OFF, INTERRUPTED) Of course. I'm happy to hold.

MAYOR PRESSES INTERCOM.

SECRETARY:

(VIA INTERCOM) Yes sir?

MAYOR:

Valla? Tell the Foamasi representative they need a visa before making planet-fall. So we need to come to some arrangement - in cash. And the land tax on that mansion. Double it.

SECRETARY:

(VIA INTERCOM) Oh, and sir? There's someone here to-

DOOR OPENS. NATHAN ENTERS.

NATHAN:

Sorry to interrupt. But if I wait for an appointment I could be here all day.

MAYOR:

Oh. You're one of Mr Lonnigan's people, aren't you?

NATHAN:

That's right. But I'm here off the books. I've come to see if we can do a bit of business together.

SCENE 30: INT. VAULT

PULSING, GLOOPING B/G AS BEFORE.

ATOMON:

(FX) Do you feel death's icy grip as yet?

DOCTOR:

Not in tip-top condition, I must admit. Paralysis, blurred vision... After-effects of some kind of neural anaesthetic.

ATOMON:

(FX) So many species, I don't always recognise the signs of termination. Let me take a closer look...

BUZZING OF PSYCHIC SCAN.

DOCTOR:

Agh! That's enough poking around my mind. I'd rather you didn't pry too closely.

ATOMON:

(FX) Hmm. You won't let me in. Perhaps I should hurry the process along.

DOCTOR:

No need for that! I'm sure I'll expire any time now. I'm feeling quite peaky after all. What am I hanging in?

DOCTOR MOVES, CABLES SHAKE AND GLOOP.

ATOMON:

(FX) My psycho-active cables. They allow the recently-departed to marinade in a brine of unfulfilled choices and aspirations. Adds to the piquancy. A delightful tang.

DOCTOR:

Food. Of course. Your people eat people. Or rather, while consuming a body, you feast on all its alternative futures.

ATOMON:

(FX) Sperovores are not savages. We are gourmets. Our palates are attuned to only the finest flavours.

DOCTOR:

The finest flavours being all the hopes and dreams encompassed in a life.

ATOMON:

(FX) You do know us.

DOCTOR:

I'm starting to remember. I know you feed on potential.

ATOMON:

(FX) It is so much more than that. And my brothers and sisters always share the feast.

DOCTOR:

That's right. A hive mind. A race that devours the quantum possibilities of the soul.

ATOMON:

(FX) How poetic. And you know what poetry makes me?

DOCTOR:

Do tell.

ATOMON:

(FX) Hungry.

SCENE 31: **EXT. OUTSIDE COURTHOUSE**

DOORS CLOSE. ACE WALKS DOWN STEPS.

ACE:

It was about time someone got me out. Where's the Doctor?

NATHAN:

Is that your way of saying thanks?

ACE:

What?

NATHAN:

I posted bail. Me. Out of my own pocket. Lonnigan's lot know nothing about this. Until now, they'd been happy to keep you locked up for as long as it took.

ACE:

As long as what took?

NATHAN:

I'm going to show you. Call it a hunch. Call it stupidity. But I think you might be able to help me out.

ACE:

What are you to Lefty Lonnigan, exactly? You're not exactly sticking to the henchman rulebook.

NATHAN:

Oh, I'm nothing much to him. But he's a person of special interest to me.

ACE:

So he's definitely not dead then.

NATHAN:

No. Not dead.

ACE:

Good. I'd rather he was alive if I'm gonna punch him in his one good eye. For what he did to the Doctor.

NATHAN:

Cool it, for now. 'Ace', was it?

ACE:

That's my name. Don't wear it out.

NATHAN:

Believe me, you'd just become very expendable to Lefty and his pals.

ACE:

I need to see my friend. If what I think has happened has happened... Well, he'll be in a state.

NATHAN:

(CAGY, HEDGING HIS BETS ON TRUSTING ACE) You wouldn't believe what kind of state. No, Ace. Not here. My hovercar's down the next street. I know where we'll find them.

SCENE 32: EXT. RICOSTA, MONTAGE OF LOCATIONS

MONTAGE. HOVERCARS POWER UP AND ZOOM OFF. 'ITALIAN JOB'-STYLE MONTAGE MUSIC. LEFTY, GLORIA AND MEL'S VOICES IN 'FOREGROUND' DESCRIBING PLAN.

LEFTY:

(VOICEOVER) So this is how it's gonna go down. Freddie and Frank. You'll be taking the mini-hovers down the promenade.

MINI HOVER CARS ZOOMING OUT ALONG BUSY RICOSTAN STREET.

LEFTY:

(VOICEOVER) Charlie. You wait for the signal. Then get the container truck moving.

BIG CONTAINER STARTING UP. AND DRIVING OFF.

MEL:

(VOICEOVER) Where's he taking that?

GLORIA:

(VOICEOVER) We'll draw too much attention driving that up to the Bank. That's where our mini-hovers come in. We've rigged up a jammer broadcast for the traffic controls. Every traffic-light and navcom in Ricosta central. Just get in position..

TRAFFIC JAMS. HONKING. MINI HOVER CARS PULLING UP.

LEFTY:

(VOICEOVER) Then Freddie and Frank activate their gizmos.

JAMMING SIGNAL STARTS BEEPING. MORE TRAFFIC NOISE, CAR DOORS SLAM. ANGRY SHOUTS.

WILDTRACK RICOSTANS:

Oi!/ Out the way!/ What's the hold-up?

LEFTY:

(VOICEOVER) The signal goes out, and we snarl up the whole city — all apart from Main Street.

GLORIA:

(VOICEOVER) So the container can get though.

CONTAINER LORRY DRIVES DOWN EMPTY STREET

GLORIA:

(VOICEOVER) With us lot sitting in the back, and our TARDIS.

CROSS TO:

SCENE 33: INT. CONTAINER TRUCK (CONTINUOUS)

ENCLOSED CONTAINER TRUCK. ENGINE RUNNING OUTSIDE.

LEFTY:

So, Charlie's taking us to Main Street. The Security Centre, right over the Vault of the Bank of Ricosta.

GLORIA:

Any word from the new boy?

LEFTY:

Never made it back. I'll just have to take care of this bit myself.

SHUTTER DOOR OF CONTAINER PULLED OPEN.

LEFTY:

Me, Tren and Gart can deal with ground floor security. Given my... particular advantage.

MEL:

Being dead.

GLORIA:

Yes, that. It'll send the scanners into a tizzy. Force a self-diagnostic.

LEFTY:

And that's our window. (GETTING UP) Come on you lot.

LEFTY CLUNKS OUT, OTHERS FOLLOW.

CROSS TO:

SCENE 34: EXT. STREET, OUTSIDE BANK (CONTINUOUS)

LEFTY, GLORIA, MEL, AND TWO MORE THUGS STEP ONTO PAVEMENT.
DISTANT TRAFFIC JAM NOISE.

LEFTY:

Tren? Gart? Got those canisters?

THUGS:

Yes, boss.

LEFTY:

Right then. (STRIDING FORWARDS) A dead man walked into a bank...

BANK DOORS SWISH OPEN. LEFTY AND TWO THUGS WALK IN. DOORS
CLOSE. CANISTERS THROWN INSIDE. HISS OF GAS, CRIES OF ALARM,
WITHIN.

GUARDS:

(INSIDE BANK) Stop!/ Don't move!/ No, wait!/ Gas!!!/ Aaaargh!/
(CHOKING)

MEL:

They're not hurting them, are they?

GLORIA:

Knockout gas. Harmless. They'll just get bruises when they hit
the floor.

GUARDS FALLING INSIDE. BANK ALARMS START.

GLORIA:

(WALKING FORWARD) That's our cue.

MEL:

But the alarms-

GLORIA:

No-one gets through the traffic, remember? And by the time they
do, we'll be away. (CALLING) Charlie! Bring the blue box in on
the cart!

DOORS SWISH OPEN. GLORIA HURRIES IN, MEL FOLLOWING.

GLORIA:

Follow me, Mel! Computer room. Fifth floor!

SCENE 35: INT. NATHAN'S HOVERCAR, RICOSTAN STREETS

TRAFFIC JAM. JAMMED VEHICLES HONKING.

ACE:

Traffic's bad.

NATHAN:

Yeah. Ricosta normally prides itself on running like clockwork. That way the toll charges keep rolling in.

NATHAN OPENS HOVERCAR DOORS.

ACE:

You reckon it might be quicker to walk?

NATHAN:

Yeah. If the traffic's stopped. That means they've started.

THEY GET OUT.

SCENE 36: **EXT. RICOSTAN STREETS (CONTINUOUS)**

TRAFFIC JAM ALL AROUND.

ACE:

Who's started what?

NATHAN:

You'll see. Come on. We need to hurry.

ACE AND NATHAN JOG ALONG THROUGH TRAFFIC JAM THROUGHOUT FOLLOWING.

ACE:

Where to? Why? Your handsome mug might let you play the man of mystery card with some people. But not me. What are you doing?

NATHAN:

I'm doing my job.

ACE:

I thought you were a freelance criminal.

NATHAN:

No, Ace. Time to come clean. I'm a policeman.

ACE:

Gordon Bennett.

NATHAN:

No. Nathan Later. Undercover. And I want to nail Lefty Lonnigan. Because he's made my life a misery.

THEY RUN ON, TRAFFIC JAM NOISES FADE.

SCENE 37: INT. BANK COMPUTER ROOM

BLEEPING SECURITY CENTRE. BUILDING ALARMS ONGOING. MEL AND GLORIA TAPPING AT KEYBOARDS UNDER FOLLOWING.

LEFTY:

(VOICEOVER) So. Next bit of the plan. While Red here is working on the computers with... 'The Doctor'-

MEL:

(VOICEOVER) The name's Melanie!

LEFTY:

(VOICEOVER) While you two work on the computers, I'll have knocked out the guards. Charlie brings that TARDIS inside on the hovercart and we'll be waiting for you to peel back Vault security.

COMPUTERS BEEPING. ALARMS STOP.

MEL:

That's better. I can hear myself think.

GLORIA:

Mel? How's it coming over there?

MEL:

I'm in. Switching off all the cameras now.

CLICKS. MEL CARRIES ON WORKING. COMPUTERS BEEPING IN RESPONSE.

MEL:

And vault combination... reset. On the inner and outer locks. To something a little easier.

GLORIA:

Ten thousand possibilities on each. You should crack it in no time at all.

MEL:

Well, give me half an hour.

GLORIA:

Time Lord. You can have whatever time you like! Now, I just have to wipe the security footage, clear memory buffers, and reset the system.

COMPUTERS BEEPING AND RESETTING.

GLORIA:

It's like we were never here. Nothing for the Ricostan police to worry about at all...

MEL:

All done. I'm just calling the elevator.

UNDER FOLLOWING, LIFT ARRIVES AND OPENS. MEL AND GLORIA RUN INTO IT. DOORS CLOSE.

LEFTY:

(VOICEOVER) And then when you've finished, we can all meet-

MEL:

(VOICEOVER) Down in the basement-

GLORIA:

(VOICEOVER) Outside the Vault.

LIFT PINGS THROUGH FLOORS...

THEN CROSS STRAIGHT TO:

SCENE 38: **INT. RICOSTAN BANK VAULT**

LIFT PINGS ON ARRIVAL AND OPENS. MEL STEPS OUT.

MEL:

So that's everything?

LEFTY:

Everything. All that's left to do is break inside. Inner and outer doors. Then we take out the goodies and load up our blue holdall.

GLORIA:

Ready to do your safe-cracking stuff, Mel?

MEL:

Ready. 'Doctor'.

MEL STEPS FORWARD AND ACTIVATES VAULT LOCK.

SCENE 39: **EXT. RICOSTAN STREET**

TRAFFIC JAM, FAR OFF. ACE AND NATHAN HURRY ALONG EMPTY STREET.

ACE:

How come you've made it personal?

NATHAN:

My dad. He was a cop like me. And he never caught him. It drove him mad. Lefty always stayed two steps ahead. Dad took it out on us. One of the many things Lefty Lonnigan stole was my childhood.

ACE:

How'd he end up the full Long John Silver? What happened to him?

NATHAN:

No-one knows for sure. Lefty came out of nowhere. All it said in the hospital records was some explosion. Must've been a job gone wrong. Over twenty years back. Him and one Sabalom Glitz struck up quite a partnership.

ACE:

Hang on... Glitz?! (BEAT) Run that by me again?

SCENE 40: INT. VAULT

DOCTOR WRIGGLING IN GLOOPY TUBES.

ATOMON:

(FX) What are you doing?

DOCTOR:

(STRUGGLING) If I'm not dead, I'm certainly not going to lie down.

ATOMON:

(FX) You cannot escape. You may not be deceased now. But you very soon will be. I have requested authorisation for an intervention.

DOCTOR:

Authorisation? Oh yes, from your parent company.

ATOMON:

(FX) Think of it as... an accounting error, Mr Lonnigan. One that will very soon be corrected.

DOCTOR:

(STOPS STRUGGLING) I'm sorry. What did you call me?

SCENE 41: EXT. OUTSIDE RICOSTAN BANK

ACE AND NATHAN WALK THROUGH QUIET STREET.

NATHAN:

Lonnigan and Glitz. Partners in crime. Ever since they were laid up in the same hospital ward.

ACE:

Glitz always finds his feet.

NATHAN:

You know him?

ACE:

He hung around a place I worked. Like a bad smell. (STOPPING)
It's deserted. Is the street closed?

NATHAN:

That was the idea. Everyone's navcom's been told there are roadworks. Only there aren't. Here's the bank.

THEY GO UP STEPS.

ACE:

Some security. Doors open and everyone's asleep.

NATHAN:

Looks like it all went to plan.

ACE:

There's a robbery going on?

NATHAN:

This is the thing I thought you could help with. Sticking a spanner in their works. Gloria's works.

ACE:

Gloria?

NATHAN:

Lefty's 'accountant'. Appeared out of nowhere last week. She's quite a force of nature.

POLICE SIRENS APPROACH.

NATHAN:

Ah. Not quite to plan, then. We should hide somewhere. Inside.

ACE:

I thought you were the police?

NATHAN:

I am. Just not the Ricostan police.

THEY HURRY INTO BANK

SCENE 42: INT. VAULT

MUFFLED WHIRRING OUTSIDE DOORS.

DOCTOR:

Perhaps I'm wrong.

ATOMON:

(FX) Pardon?

DOCTOR:

Perhaps I should let you take a peek after all.

ATOMON:

(FX) Into your mind?

DOCTOR:

Why not. I think we have the measure of one another. Come on in. It's open.

PSYCHIC PULSE.

ATOMON:

(FX) Why yes... I- Aaaagh!

SQUELCH OF SLUMPING TENTACLES.

DOCTOR:

(PANTING WITH EFFORT) Very much bigger on the inside. Can be a shock if you're not expecting it. Enough of a shock to buy me some time. So long as whoever's breaking in hurries up!

DOCTOR STRUGGLES TO GET FREE OF CABLES.

SCENE 43: INT. OUTSIDE VAULT

CODE-CRACKER CYCLING THROUGH COMBINATIONS.

GLORIA:

How are we doing?

MEL:

Almost there. Safe-cracking has become a speciality of mine. Lots of practice, recently. There we are!

CLUNK AS VAULT DOOR UNLOCKS AND OPENS.

GLORIA:

Good. One more door to go.

POLICE ARRIVE IN FOYER NOISILY, OFF.

LEFTY:

What's that? No-one should be able to get near this place.

POLICE:

(LOUD-HAILER, OFF) This is the police! Nobody move! We know you're in there, Mr Lonnigan.

LEFTY:

What?! Someone's grassed!

GLORIA:

Nathan!

SCENE 44: INT. CORRIDOR, OUTSIDE VAULT ROOM

POLICE ASSEMBLING AT END OF CORRIDOR. ACE AND NATHAN SNEAK ALONG.

ACE:

(SOTTO) But if the police are onto them-

NATHAN:

(SOTTO) It's a bit more complicated than that. Ricostan police can be very accommodating.

POLICE:

(LOUD-HAILER, OFF) Two minutes, Lonnigan. Then you give yourself up.

NATHAN:

(SOTTO) They're as likely to take a bribe as arrest him. I need to catch him in the act. (PULLS OUT WEAPONS)

ACE:

Which is why you brought – guns?

NATHAN:

Something tells me you're a crack shot, Ace.

ACE:

I have my moments.

PASSES WEAPON TO ACE.

NATHAN:

Here. Remember where they're standing. I'm about to drop a smoke grenade.

ACE:

You're giving me a gun?

NATHAN:

Stun-gun. I'm not gonna hand you a deadly weapon. I'm not that stupid.

ACE:

I could still shoot you.

NATHAN:

And you're not that stupid either. We'd both end up in prison. Ready? Five of them.

ACE:

Ready.

NATHAN THROWS SMOKE GRENADE — POP AND A HISS.

POLICE:

(CONFUSION, COUGHING) 'What?'

ACE AND NATHAN RUN IN. FIVE TASER BLASTS IN QUICK SUCCESSION.

POLICE:

Aaagh!

SCENE 45: INT. OUTSIDE VAULT (CONTINUOUS)

POLICE FALL TO GROUND. ACE AND NATHAN RUN UP.

NATHAN:
(CALLING) Mr Lonnigan!

LEFTY:
(JUST OFF) Nathan. I thought you'd grassed.

NATHAN:
Not me, boss. I was running Plan B all along. If our new recruit couldn't remember how to fly that thing... I thought I'd bring someone who could.

ACE:
Hang on. I haven't agreed to anything yet.

GLORIA:
Lefty. Go with Nathan. Help the others tie up those policemen before they wake up.

LEFTY:
Good idea.

LEFTY AND NATHAN WALK OFF.

ACE:
And you – you're...

MEL:
(COUGHS, APPROACHING) I know that voice... Ace? Is that you?

ACE:
Donut?! What are you doing here? (BEAT) Hang on. Are you cracking a safe?

GLORIA:
Isn't this nice. Can we get on?

ACE:
But you're-

MEL:
Yes. Ace. There's something you need to know.

CROSS TO:

SCENE 46: INT. VAULT (CONTINUOUS)

ATOMON STIRRING. DOCTOR DROPS DOWN FROM CABLING.

ATOMON:
(MOANS)

DOCTOR:
(GETTING UP) Have a lie down. It's good for shock! (TO SELF)
I've bought a few minutes. Long enough for whoever's out there
to open these doors.

DOCTOR HURRIES TO DOOR.

ACE:
(MUFFLED, OUTSIDE) You mean you already know?

DOCTOR:
(TO SELF) Ace!

MEL:
(MUFFLED, OUTSIDE) About the Doctor? Yes. Yes I do.

DOCTOR:
(TO SELF) My oh my. Miss Melanie Bush.

GLORIA:
(MUFFLED, OUTSIDE) Ahem. Perhaps I should explain, Mel.

DOCTOR:
(TO SELF) And... who's that?

ACE:
(MUFFLED, OUTSIDE) Is it you? Really you?

GLORIA:
(MUFFLED OUTSIDE) Same hat, same coat. Same old me, Ace.

DOCTOR:
(TO SELF) Really. Who is that?!?

CROSS BACK TO:

SCENE 47: INT. BANK VAULT (CONTINUOUS)

GLORIA:

I hope you remember all I taught you. Because we'll need to warm her up and be ready to-

ACE:

(INTERRUPTS) Right! Of course. You need to get in the TARDIS and-

MEL:

(CUTS ACROSS THEM - SHE'S GOT TO STOP ACE HELPING) Ace. Don't agree to anything.

ACE:

Hang on, Donut. You don't understand. If this is the Doctor...

MEL:

That's the thing. It's not. This is someone who was lining you up to be their patsy until I came along.

GLORIA:

Melanie?

MEL:

Drop the act, Gloria. I've already worked it out. It's a con.

ACE:

But I saw it happen!

MEL:

What you saw was Gloria here dressed up. What did you do? Bung on a hat and a wig? Fake some special effects? If only I'd been there, I'd have known the difference.

ACE:

But... I've read about it. It's a total change.

MEL:

Think, Ace! When the Doctor made a break for it, before he got shot. Did you actually see his face? (BEAT) Didn't think so. You needn't have gone to all that trouble, Gloria. I never believed you were him. I'm robbing this vault for my own reasons.

ACE:

You? Is this Glitz's idea?

MEL:

No. Glitz isn't here because Glitz left me in the lurch. I need thousands of credits and I need them now. If going along with Gloria's little charade helps me get them – well, that's good enough for me.

ACE:

But Donut-

MEL:

Mel. And lovely as it is to see you again, Ace, I don't need you coming along and messing everything up now! Keep a hold of her, Gloria.

GLORIA:

A pleasure. (GRABS ACE)

ACE:

Wha- (GRABBED)

MEL:

I need some peace while I finish cracking this vault.

SAFE-CRACKING TOOL BUZZES.

CROSS BACK TO:

SCENE 48: **INT. VAULT (CONTINUOUS)**

SAFE-CRACKING TOOL BUZZING OUTSIDE DOOR.

DOCTOR:

Come on, come on.

ATOMON:

(WAKING, FX) Euurghh... You are not Lefty Lonnigan.

DOCTOR:

No. Unless it means you'll let me go. In which case, yes.

ATOMON:

(FX) I've wasted time tuning my quantum extraction to the wrong bio-signature. You are something more.

DOCTOR:

It's often been said.

ATOMON:

(SLITHERING CLOSER, FX) I've a good mind to kill you for inconveniencing me.

DOCTOR:

You're not the only one who's been inconvenienced!

ATOMON:

(FX) But it would be a waste. I sense a tantalising banquet of potentiality...

DOCTOR:

Oh, you've no idea... But you can't feed off my potential until you're inside my mind.

ATOMON:

(FX) And you have been particularly good at keeping me out.

LOCKS SLIDE OPEN.

ATOMON:

(FX) What is that noise?

CROSS BACK TO:

SCENE 49: INT. OUTSIDE VAULT (CONTINUOUS)

LEFTY:

How's it going?

MEL:

We're in.

LEFTY:

Ready boys. Let's load up.

VAULT CREAKS OPEN TO GLOOPY, GURGLING INTERIOR.

GLORIA:

That's not right...

LEFTY:

We need lights.

LEFTY WALKS INTO VAULT.

DOCTOR:

(FROM INSIDE) No, stay back!

CLICKS AND FOOM OF FLOODLIGHTS.

ATOMON:

(FX, GURGLING ROAR) Lefty Lonnigan! At last!

TENTACLES REACH ALL AROUND, GRABBING LEFTY. DOCTOR RUNS OUT.

LEFTY:

(FROM INSIDE) Aaaargh!

DOCTOR:

Hello Ace.

ACE:

You're back!

DOCTOR:

Never went away. Hello Mel.

MEL:

Doctor! You're alive!

DOCTOR:

I am. And I'm also very disappointed.

END OF PART TWO

PART THREE

REPRISE:

MEL:

Doctor! You're alive!

DOCTOR:

I am. And I'm also very disappointed.

CONTINUES INTO:

SCENE 50: INT. VAULT INTERIOR [CONTINUOUS]

ATOMON:

(FX, GURGLING ROAR)

SPEROVORE TENTACLES LASHING.

ATOMON:

Feed me!

LEFTY:

Charlie! Lads! Help me!

MORE TENTACLES SLITHER OUT AND DRAG THUGS OFF.

3 x THUGS:

Urgh!/ No!/ It's got me! [ETC]

ATOMON:

I know you. Charlie Crow. Tren Curtis. Gart Visk. Your biosignatures are authorised.

CROSS TO:

SCENE 51: INT. OUTSIDE VAULT (CONTINUOUS)

LASHING TENTACLES INSIDE.

LEFTY & THUGS:

(FROM INSIDE – CRIES OF PAIN AND TERROR)

GLORIA:

So where's all the loot?

NATHAN:

There isn't any. Just...

GLORIA:

All those bodies. Hanging in wires. It's like some kind of morgue. Some kind of...

DOCTOR:

I believe the word you're looking for is 'larder'.

LEFTY:

(FROM INSIDE) Aaaargh!

GLORIA:

Lefty!

DOCTOR:

Now you remember him. Run! There's nothing you can do for them!

NATHAN:

Come on, Gloria. You heard the man. Out of here!

NATHAN DRAGS GLORIA OFF ALONG CORRIDOR.

ACE:

What about the TARDIS?

DOCTOR:

We can't let it get a sniff of it. Outside, both of you. Now!

MEL:

Let what get a sniff of it? Doctor?!

DOCTOR:

I'll explain once we're out of reach of its tentacles. And I'll be wanting a word with you, Miss Melanie Bush!

THEY RUN OUT AFTER GLORIA AND NATHAN.

SCENE 52: INT. BANK FOYER

GLORIA AND NATHAN ENTER RUNNING FROM CORRIDOR.

GLORIA:

It got Lefty! That Sperovore scooped him up and took him!

NATHAN:

Sperovore? You mean the giant eel things with all the mouths?

GLORIA:

Not eels. Tentacles. That was just one of them.

MEL, DOCTOR AND ACE CATCH UP, RUNNING INTO FOYER.

MEL:

(CALLING) So what really happened, Gloria? You sent the Doctor in there? As that thing's prisoner?

GLORIA:

(SLOWING) Not exactly, no.

DOCTOR:

It certainly wasn't expecting me. Hello. I'm the Doctor. Have we met?

MEL:

Gloria has been pretending to be you.

DOCTOR:

Has she now?

ACE:

Only I saw him change! Um, 'her' change! The Doctor got shot. Then sat up with that face.

DOCTOR:

Shot? I don't think I've been shot. Drugged perhaps.

MEL:

It was a hoax. I've been living with Glitz long enough, I can spot a grifter a mile away.

NATHAN:

Takes one to know one, I guess.

MEL:

I think what happened was that Glitz filled his cronies in on the Doctor and the TARDIS. So as soon as the opportunity arose to fool one of his friends into helping them, Gloria took it. Your idea, was it?

GLORIA:

I do like to think I'm the brains of the operation. Once Glitz filled me in, I came up with the plan. Time Lord neurotoxin – that's not cheap – voice recordings and a hologram face-effect.

DOCTOR:

I don't know whether to be flattered or insulted. I'll take my hat back, thank you very much. (TAKING IT)

GLORIA:

Here. (TAKING COAT OFF) Have the rest too. Even I can't make beige and paisley look good.

GLORIA HANDS OVER COAT AND UMBRELLA. BUZZ OF SONIC SCREWDRIVER.

DOCTOR:

Thank you.

GLORIA:

Nathan. With me. We're getting the hell out of here.

GLORIA:

OK.

DOORS SWISH OPEN, GLORIA AND NATHAN EXIT.

MEL:

Now wait a minute!

DOCTOR:

Let them go, Mel.

ACE:

Yeah. Aren't we missing a bigger question here? Like what the heck was that thing in the safe?

MEL:

I suppose... And if this is supposed to be a bank, what happened to all the money?

SCENE 53: EXT. STREET

TRAFFIC IN DISTANCE. NATHAN AND GLORIA RUNNING, TRYING CAR DOORS.

GLORIA:

I don't believe it. Sperovores. Here all along.

NATHAN:

Never mind that now. As soon as the traffic clears, this place will be crawling with Ricostan police.

GLORIA OPENS UP HOVERCAR.

GLORIA:

Here. This one's open. Get in.

NATHAN:

Where are we going?

GLORIA:

Back to the island. And pronto. If the Sperovores are already here, I need to pack.

SCENE 54: INT. VAULT INTERIOR

GURGLING HEARBEAT. TENTACLES GRABBING LEFTY AND OTHERS AND SUSPENDING THEM IN THE CABLING.

LEFTY:

(GASPING) I can't breathe. My life support. It's stopped working... Charlie? Tren?

THUGS:

(MOANING)

ATOMON:

(FX) These others will make a very tasty amuse-bouche for another day. I need time to absorb the bio-signatures. But you. I am more than prepared for you.

LEFTY:

What do you mean?

ATOMON:

(FX) You are what was promised to us. You are Lefty Lonnigan.

LEFTY:

(STRUGGLING) Aaargh! What's happening to me. What are you doing?

ATOMON:

(FX) Finishing touches. I am revered among my people. Do you know my people?

LEFTY:

You're... monsters... Legs, mouths, everywhere.

ATOMON:

(FX) Sperovore.

LEFTY:

You're Sperovores? I thought they were loan sharks. Bankers.

ATOMON:

(FX) We are voices on the end of a line to most of our clients. But I... You know what I am, Mr Lonnigan?

LEFTY:

What...

ATOMON:

(FX) You know what is the most valued and esteemed skill among the Sperovores? Among a race of financiers and connoisseurs? What role is coveted above all others?

LEFTY:

No? What?

ATOMON:

(FX) I am Atomon. I am our chef.

LEFTY:

Please. No. Please!

ATOMON:

(FX) Hear me, brothers and sisters of the board. The banquet is prepared. Now at last. We can feed!!!

PSYCHIC BUZZING STARTS, GLOOPY SUCKING SOUND, MANY MOUTHS FEEDING.

LEFTY:

Aaagh!

SCENE 55: **EXT. OUTSIDE BANK**

DOORS SWISH OPEN. DOCTOR, ACE AND MEL EXIT ONTO STEPS. POLICE SIRENS APPROACHING IN DISTANCE.

MEL:

The police are on their way. Again.

DOCTOR:

Good. They can take care of their colleagues.

ACE:

What about the monster in the vault?

DOCTOR:

I suspect it will be quite happy to leave the authorities alone. And the authorities will be happy to leave the monster alone too.

ACE:

You mean they know it's there?

DOCTOR:

I can come up with several scenarios which would be profitable for both parties, yes.

MEL:

(RUNNING OFF) Give me thirty seconds. I'll fetch us a hovercar.

DOCTOR:

Do you think Mel's changed, Ace?

ACE:

I guess she has. The Donut I knew wouldn't be the first one to run off and nick a car. That's usually my job.

DOCTOR:

Travelling with me. I always hope it's for the best. I thought she'd be a good influence on Glitz, rather than the other way around. I wasn't wrong to let her go off with him, was I?

HOVERCAR PULLS UP. DOORS OPEN, MEL STEPS OUT.

MEL:

Easy when you know how. Hop in!

ACE:

Hovercar? Wicked. (RACING TO DRIVER'S SEAT) Bagsy driver's seat!

SCENE 56: **EXT. HOVERBOAT**

NATHAN DRIVING, HOVERBOAT SPEEDING OVER WAVES.

NATHAN:

I'm guessing that what just happened... that wasn't part of the plan.

GLORIA:

No. Definitely not.

NATHAN:

Only, you've had me do some pretty crazy things the last few days. That whole fake shooting with the girl watching. What was that all about?

GLORIA:

I told you, Nathan. Insurance. The girl had to believe I was him. The Doctor. So she'd help us fly that box of tricks. Glitz was certain he'd never do it. Not the goody-two-shoes Doctor himself. But if his friend thought she was helping him. Well, Glitz said she'd be a soft touch.

NATHAN:

But then she got arrested and Melanie Bush turned up.

GLORIA:

And I could spin the story again. To someone who'd be even more likely to buy it. Couldn't have been more wrong about that. It's a lesson. Always keep your options open.

NATHAN:

I know you do that more than anyone. Only now it seems your little scheme's gone wrong just about every way it could.

GLORIA:

I know.

NATHAN:

No money in the vault. Everyone's seen through your con. And it looks like Lefty really is a goner this time. What option does that leave you with, Gloria?

SCENE 57: INT. HOVERCAR

ENGINE HUM IN B/G AS THEY TRAVEL ACROSS CITY. ACE DRIVING, DOCTOR AND MEL IN BACK.

DOCTOR:

So. Have you been well? Mel?

MEL:

Oh you know how it is. The 'Nosferatu' wasn't the most salubrious of living spaces, but I did what I could.

ACE:

(CALLING BACK) Yeah, pot plants and pastels always help.

MEL:

I didn't just help with the décor. Glitz and I ran into trouble. Quite a lot.

DOCTOR:

What exactly were you and Mr Glitz up to on Ricosta?

ACE:

(DRIVING) And where is that slimeball, anyway?

MEL:

Gone. At the first sign of really big trouble, he ran. And left me holding all the credit notes.

DOCTOR:

Money. Is that all it came down to? (SIGH) I thought you left to see the wonders of the universe.

MEL:

You said it was time.

DOCTOR:

No. You said you were going.

MEL:

You didn't try very hard to stop me.

DOCTOR:

Would I have? Could I have?

MEL:

I don't know. (BEAT) You're disappointed.

DOCTOR:

There's so much to see out there, so many marvels. And none of them involves money. It saddens me that you of all people have got bogged down in such grubby concerns.

MEL:

Oh.

ACE:

(DRIVING) But it sounds like you don't actually have any money.

MEL:

No. The Sperovores aren't known for their favourable lending terms.

ACE:

Sperovore?

DOCTOR:

The creature in the vault.

MEL:

They're the ones we owe all the money to.

DOCTOR:

Of course. Their greedy appetites extend far beyond their collective stomach.

ACE:

So they're rich. Fat-cat bankers. Fat... cuttlefish bankers.

DOCTOR:

One of the wealthiest species in the galaxy. If not the wealthiest. They've cornered the market in futures. Everyone's futures. A place like this could be rich pickings.

ACE:

Did you see those tentacles? Mouths instead of suckers.

DOCTOR:

All the better to eat every alternative version of your reality with.

MEL:

I admit it. I've been travelling around, trying to pull funds from every scheme Glitz had on the go. The Porcians, the Grand Betelgeuse Hotel. Ricosta was my last hope.

ACE:

Hang on... We've just visited all those places too.

DOCTOR:

Not us, Ace. The TARDIS. I wonder...

MEL:

Glitz said Lefty could be relied on. He said they had something big in the offing.

DOCTOR:

Typical Glitz. He's trying to settle his debts by robbing his creditors.

SCENE 58: **EXT. HOVERBOAT**

NATHAN DRIVING, HOVERBOAT SPEEDING OVER WAVES.

NATHAN:

How does the giant tentacle monster figure into it?

GLORIA:

That was definitely unexpected. But it explains a few things about this planet's economy. Do you think it saw me?

NATHAN:

No. Too busy grabbing Lefty and Charlie and the others. So that's a Sperovore? I've never seen one before.

GLORIA:

They're not big on public appearances. You don't need to be when you're holding the credit notes for half the galaxy. When you're the major shareholder in every bank, every insurance plan, every pension scheme in this sector. You just stay at home and count the cash.

NATHAN:

Sperovore Investment Holdings. Seems like every crook in this sector has some kind of arrangement with them.

GLORIA:

I know. Because I arranged most of them. Even for poor old Lefty.

NATHAN:

Well. I suppose we don't need to worry about him finding out. You know. About us.

HOVERBOAT SLOWS AS NATHAN PULLS UP INTO DOCK.

NATHAN:

We're here.

GLORIA:

So. There's still an 'us', is there?

NATHAN:

I don't know.

GLORIA:

But you're right. Lefty's out of the game for good.

SCENE 59: INT. LEFTY'S DYING DREAMSCAPE

GURGLING. SLOW HEARTBEAT. PSYCHIC PULSING BUZZ OF SPEROVORES FEEDING THROUGHOUT.

LEFTY:

(DISTORTED) I'm fading. The light... The light, it's going.

DREAM-LIKE DISTANT SOUND OF SPEEDING BIKE, ALARMS IN DISTANCE.

LEFTY:

(D) What am I seeing?

ATOMON:

(FX) I understand it's what your kind call 'deja vu'. All the choices of your life... pulled from the multiverse.

LEFTY:

(D) That bank job on Andromeda Nine. If I'd turned left instead of right, I'd never have been caught.

ATOMON:

(FX) Every decision, every choice... Ripples and ripples... It all adds to the flavour.

TEENAGE VOICES:

(DISTANT) Help us./ Please./ Give us some grotzits.

LEFTY:

(D) Those kids on the Blue Asteroid. If I'd left 'em the money they wanted...

ATOMON:

(FX) Mmm. You taste it, my brothers and sisters?

SPEROVORES:

(DISTANT, VIA PSYCHIC FX, TOGETHER, OVERLAPPING) Yes! Yes! It is delicious!

TENTACLES WRAPPING AROUND HIM AND SQUEEZING.

ATOMON:

(FX) This is our bargain. The secret to Ricosta's continued success. Your kind are extremely flavoursome. A delicacy.

LEFTY:

(D) My kind? Humans? You eat humans?

ATOMON:

(FX) No... We have some discernment. We eat criminals. Absorb your alternative realities. At the quantum level. Every decision. The bigger the repercussions, the tastier the nectar.

LEFTY:

(D) What?

ATOMON:

(FX) The Sperovores are gourmets and aesthetes. We like the finest things. In investment, in property, in nourishment. Some species have a collective consciousness. We have a collective... digestion system. We share all. Every taste, every sensation. The sustenance that a multiverse of possibilities brings.

SPEROVORES:

(PSYCHIC FX, OVERLAPPING) Well done, Atomon. This one is rich indeed. Complements to the chef!

ATOMON:

(FX) Every wrong turn – every robbery – every crime – every decision, good or bad. Relived at the moment of death – extended as long as possible. That is my talent. Mmm. And it is delicious.

LEFTY:

(DISTORTED SCREAMS, ECHOING AND OVERLAPPING)

SCENE 60: INT. BANK ENTRANCE

SIRENS, BUSTLING POLICE ACTIVITY. DOOR SWISHES OPEN. MAYOR STEPS INTO BANK. HE DIALS A NUMBER ON PHONE.

MAYOR:

Secretary Valla?

SECRETARY:

(D) I heard about the bank. Do they know what happened sir?

MAYOR:

No-one saw anything. Or if they did, they're not talking. The police tell me all security records were wiped. Not a trace of who did this.

SECRETARY:

(D) And the Vault?

MAYOR:

I'll have to check on it myself. Valla, make sure those expense funds are fully accessible. I may need to leave in a hurry. On... business.

SECRETARY:

(D) Very good, sir.

MAYOR HANGS UP PHONE. WALKS ACROSS FOYER.

MAYOR:

(CALLING) Police Sergeant. Tell your men they can go! I'm entering the Vault now. No-one, and I mean no-one, must enter.

MAYOR ENTERS CORRIDOR. POLICE MOVE OUT.

SCENE 61: INT. GLORIA'S ROOM, SECRET HIDEAWAY

DOOR FLUNG OPEN, GLORIA RUSHES IN AND STARTS PACKING.

NATHAN:

What are you doing? Gloria?

GLORIA:

Packing!

NATHAN:

You're going to run?

GLORIA:

Sperovores. The nastiest, richest race in the galaxy. Quantum eaters. They feed on possibilities, breaking down walls between realities, yadda yadda. I don't know the science. But then, it doesn't matter when you're being dissolved one molecule at a time! Of course I'm gonna run. (BREAKS OFF, ZIPS CASE) Do you think I can get more shoes in here?

NATHAN:

Why are they here? Are they coming for Lefty?

GLORIA:

I told you. Everyone here is in deep shtuck with them. Even little miss carrot-curls.

NATHAN:

Mel? You think she's got some kind of arrangement with S.I. Holdings?

GLORIA:

I know so. Well, her business partner had. Only Sabalom Glitz defaulted on his debts. I've seen his accounts. He was way over his eyes in hock to S.I. One of the last deals I did was to sign all his liabilities over to our Miss Bush – including herself as security.

NATHAN:

Hold on. Does she know?

GLORIA:

I doubt it. Small print so small you need an electron microscope. She was ready to take the readies. What with her previous history in that time-travel box of tricks, the Sperovores seem to think she's worth a whole lot of planet.

NATHAN:

What about our arrangement?

GLORIA:

You were fun while you lasted, Mr Later. But our little fling was always on borrowed time. If Lefty had ever found out-

NATHAN:

Lefty's gone.

GLORIA:

Yeah.

NATHAN:

So?

GLORIA:

So...

NATHAN:

You and me.

GLORA HEAVES SUITCASES ONTO FLOOR. HEADS FOR DOOR.

GLORIA:

I'm leaving. You're pretty. But not so pretty I'll risk my neck.

NATHAN:

Well. In that case. That's helped me make up my mind. I'm just gonna have to make an honest woman of you.

GLORIA:

(STOPPING) You'll... do what?

NATHAN:

(APPROACHING) Gloria Swannicker. Will you do me the honour.

CLICKS ON HANDCUFFS.

NATHAN:

Of accompanying me to Galactic Police HQ.

GLORIA:

What?

NATHAN:

You're nicked.

SCENE 62: INT. VAULT

GURGLING ABSORPTION OF FEEDING SPEROVORES. VAULT DOOR SWINGS OPEN.

MAYOR:

(OUTSIDE DOOR) Hello? I'm sorry to disturb but-

ATOMON:

(FX) Stay there! We are occupied.

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(PSYCHIC FX) The palate is sensational. And we have made our decision. Our final meal was worth the investment at least.

MAYOR APPROACHES OUTSIDE.

MAYOR:

(OUTSIDE DOOR) Excuse me? May I interrupt?

ATOMON:

(FX) I said stay!

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(PSYCHIC FX) Who disturbs our repast?

ATOMON:

(FX) One of the Ricostan creatures. Please, continue digesting while I pass on the news.

TENTACLES EXTEND INTO HALL.

CROSS TO:

SCENE 63: INT. OUTSIDE VAULT

ATOMON'S TENTACLES SLITHER OUT OF VAULT DOOR.

LEFTY:

(FROM INSIDE – DISTANT GURGLING CRIES)

MAYOR:

Um... Who's that?

ATOMON:

(FX) Mr Lefty Lonnigan is within.

MAYOR:

Yes. I already went to his funeral.

ATOMON:

(FX) I am not happy. My brothers and sisters are not happy. It has been ratified by the board. Sperovore involvement with this planet is over.

MAYOR:

What do you mean?

ATOMON:

(FX) Ricosta is exposed. We cannot afford exposure.

MAYOR:

Please. No. Anyone who knows, we can find them. Track them down and get rid of them. There's no reason our arrangement cannot continue.

ATOMON:

(FX) It is too late. They are coming.

MAYOR:

What?

ATOMON:

(FX) I have already called in the receivers. The proposal was passed unanimously. My Sperovore brethren are on their way.

SCENE 64: **EXT. OUTSIDE MAYOR'S OFFICE.**

BUSTLING CROWD. TRAFFIC STARTING TO MOVE AGAIN.

ACE:

Why have we come back to that useless Mayor's office? We could have gone anywhere. What about that secret island Mel was on about?

MEL:

That's where Lefty's gang will have regrouped. What's left of them anyway.

DOCTOR:

I need the help of the local authorities to retrieve the TARDIS with the minimum of fuss. I suspect they may already know what's in their Vault. But I know what those creatures can do.

ACE:

The Sperovores?

DOCTOR:

Eaters of hope. Devourers of dreams. They feed on possibility itself.

ACE:

Alternative realities. Parallel universes. I get it. Potential energy flows between every point in the multiverse. And they can stick their tentacles in the stream.

MEL:

Ace? How do you know all this? How long have I been away?

DOCTOR:

Time is relative. For you, it might only have been a matter of months.

ACE:

But for me and the Doctor. Well, we've had a whole world of adventures in between.

MEL:

Days like crazy paving.

DOCTOR:

You remember?

MEL:

Like it was yesterday. How could I ever forget?

DOCTOR:

Memory like an elephant. Of course. Ah Mel, we're all of us made of dust and made of stars. But you decide which one you reach for.

MEL:

I can tell you're disappointed. If you'd just give me a chance to explain.

DOCTOR:

No time. Sorry. We never get the time, do we? Before we're plunged into another life or death situation. And here we are again. Another planet. Another ultimatum.

ACE:

Yeah, but can we save the reminiscing till we've got the TARDIS back from that room full of octopus legs?

MAYOR APPROACHES.

DOCTOR:

Ah. Here comes the Mayor. Perhaps we can help each other.

ACE:

I doubt it. The Ricostans aren't much use for anything. Unless it's a cover-up. And that one's as crooked as they come.

MEL:

No. If the Doctor's right, and they're already trapped in some kind of deal with the Sperovores, they'll be desperate for any way out they can get.

DOCTOR:

Very astute, Mel. There were a lot of bodies in that Vault. And its occupant knew who to expect next. As if everything's been done to order...

MAYOR:

(APPROACHING) Excuse me... You're waiting for me?

MEL:

Yes. Mayor.

MAYOR:

Sorry. I'm terribly busy.

DOCTOR:

I know. Your world is in danger. And I'm the only one who can save it.

MAYOR:

In that case. You'd better come in...

THEY ENTER MAYOR'S OFFICE.

SCENE 65: INT. SPEROVORE FINANCE OFFICES

MUZAK ON PHONE. CUTS OFF. BEEP OF CONNECTION.

GLORIA:

(VIA PHONE) Hello? Is that a real person?

SPEROVORE FINANCIER:

(FX) You are through to Sperovore Financial Services. How can we help?

GLORIA:

(VIA PHONE) Customer code. Alpha nine, alpha zero, one one, treble seven.

BEEPING AS DETAILS ARE BROUGHT UP.

SPEROVORE FINANCIER:

(FX) Ah. Yes. Miss Swannicker. One of our most valuable associates. How can we be of service today?

CROSS TO:

SCENE 66: INT. SECRET ISLAND HIDEAWAY (CONTINUOUS)

GLORIA:

(TO PHONE) I'd like to-

SPEROVORE FINANCIER:

(VIA PHONE, FX) Please hold while I bring up your account details.

GLORIA PACING, MUZAK PLAYING ON PHONE.

NATHAN:

I'm stretching the rules letting you do this.

GLORIA:

One phone call. I'm allowed one phone call, right?

NATHAN:

Usually people call their lawyer. Not their financial advisers.

MUZAK STOPS.

SPEROVORE FINANCIER:

(D) Miss Swannicker? Thank you for holding.

GLORIA:

Shh! They're back. (TO PHONE) I currently find myself attached to one of your... um... assets as it enters liquidation mode. The planet Ricosta?

SPEROVORE FINANCIER:

(VIA PHONE, FX) Hmm. I've got that coming up negative.

GLORIA:

Check again. It's a very recent transaction.

SPEROVORE FINANCIER:

(VIA PHONE, FX) I see. Yes. We're getting updated now. All assets on the planet surface are in the process of being seized.

GLORIA:

That's my issue. I am on the surface. I and my... associate would like to enquire after a means of departure.

SPEROVORE FINANCIER:

(VIA PHONE, FX) I see. (BEAT) A new credit advance would normally require an application through our-.

GLORIA:

(INTERRUPTS) Tell you what. This is rather urgent. Any chance I can speak to your manager?

SCENE 67: INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE

DOCTOR, ACE & MEL ENTER BEHIND MAYOR. AND CLOSE THE DOOR.

MAYOR:

So: how exactly can you help?

DOCTOR:

I'm guessing, Mr Mayor, that your guest is a little annoyed.

MAYOR:

(FEIGNING IGNORANCE) Guest?

ACE:

Drop the act, fur-face. It'll save us all a lot of time.

MEL:

We know about the Sperovores. You've cooked up some arrangement where you're handing over your residents in exchange for... what?

DOCTOR:

A line of credit, perhaps?

MAYOR:

(COVERING UP) We have faced challenging times. Everyone has had to tighten their belts, but with careful fiscal management, Ricosta has come through. Now we are a land of plenty!

MEL:

(WORKING IT OUT) You were in a lot of trouble with the galactic common currency a while back. Overspending, trying to attract business... but no proper control over your debts.

DOCTOR:

Since then, the planet's 'economic miracle' has been somewhat... miraculous.

ACE:

(REALISATION) You're feeding these Sperovores all your ex-pats just to keep the ouzo flowing!

MEL:

And keeping it all hushed up. Until now.

DOCTOR:

(BEAT) Come along, Mr Mayor. My friends and I are right. I can only begin to help if you admit what's been going on here.

MAYOR:

(BEAT, RELUCTANT) We only hand them over when they're dead. Or dying...

DOCTOR:

Yes. Suspended on the point of expiration. I've had first-hand experience.

MAYOR:

Atomon. The Sperovore's... catering agent. He was installed years ago. We had no use for the bank as a financial depository any longer, it was the most secure location.

MEL:

The most secure location? For what?

DOCTOR:

Anyone who dies on Ricosta. They're frozen, suspended just before life-signs completely fade. Then shipped to the Vault. Am I correct, Mr Mayor?

MAYOR:

We make a small interment charge to deal with the bodies... But I'm assured it's all done as humanely as possible. The subject has a chance to reflect.

MEL:

What is it they say about your whole life flashing before your eyes when you die?

DOCTOR:

Only, these people see every possible life. The Vault is filled with technology to enhance the flavour. Something akin to marinating in your own juices.

ACE:

'Retire to Ricosta. And let the Sperovores chow down on your remains'. I bet you don't put that in the brochure.

PANICKING CROWDS, OUTSIDE. RUMBLE OF SHIPS IN FAR DISTANCE OVERHEAD.

WILDTRACK RICOSTANS:

(SCREAMS OF PANIC, OFF) Aaagh!/ What is that?/ It's coming this way! [ETC]

ACE:

Sounds like something's spooking the locals. (RUNNING OFF) I'll go and check it out!

ACE EXITS OFFICE.

DOCTOR:

So? Anything to say, Mr Mayor?

MAYOR:

It was meant to be secret.

MEL:

I bet the Sperovores thought that way too. They don't want your grubby little deal exposed. People might look at their businesses in a whole new light. (BEAT) Hang on... It's gone very dark outside all of a sudden.

DOCTOR USES SONIC.

DOCTOR:

Planetary shielding. They've put the whole world in lockdown. Just to keep everything quiet.

MAYOR:

I know... Ships can't get in, or out. There's a beacon warning Ricosta is closed for business. I've had representatives from the port authorities calling me for the last half hour.

DOCTOR:

So much for you trying to make a quick getaway. That's what all these piles of cash are meant for, I presume.

MEL:

You were trying to save your own skin and leave everyone else to face the music?

MAYOR:

(WHIMPERS)

BUILDINGS CRASH, JUST OFF. CROWDS RUN SCREAMING. ACE RUNS IN.

WILDTRACK RICOSTANS:

(SCREAMS OF PANIC)

MEL:

Things are about to get a whole lot worse.

ACE:

(BREATHLESS) Hate to be the bearer of bad news. But there's a twenty-foot squid coming down the high street. (SNIFFS) What's that smell? Ozone?

SONIC BOOM ABOVE. OFFICE WINDOWS SHATTER. CROWDS SCREAMING IN TERROR.

DOCTOR:

(OVER NOISE) The arrival of a hyperspace ship.

SEVERAL MORE BOOMS. MORE PANIC.

DOCTOR:

(OVER NOISE) Lots of hyperspace ships!

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(FX) Attention all residents of Ricosta!

ATOMON:

(CALLING, OUTSIDE) Lord Mayor! Prepare yourself! My people are arriving!

DOCTOR:

Atomon.

SCENE 68: **INT. SECRET HIDEAWAY**

COMMS ROOM CONTROLS. BEEPING OF BEACON, WITH REPEATED MESSAGE RECORDING PLAYBACK.

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(VIA MONITOR, FX) Repeat. Sperovore Investment Holdings is foreclosing on Ricosta. Ricosta is closed for business. Ricostan space is restricted. Do not enter. Repeat.

GLORIA:

That's the beacon message. To everyone outside of orbit. Warning them off. Keeping us in isolation. While Down here on the surface... (USES CONTROLS TO CHANGE CHANNELS) ... this is all over the news feed. But no-one offworld is ever gonna see it.

CHANNEL SWITCHES TO SHOW DISTANT CARNAGE OF SPEROVORE TENTACLES ATTACKING CITIES, SMASHING BUILDINGS, PEOPLE FLEEING, ON SCREEN.

NATHAN:

What the hell is going on out there?

GLORIA:

Giant tentacles coming out of the sky, scooping people up into their ships. For a prolonged and horrible death. I think that just about covers it.

NATHAN:

How can they do this?

GLORIA:

They like to present a respectable face to the outside universe when they do business. Well, as respectable as you can be, given their clientele. But once the receivers get called in, the planetary shields go up and all bets are off.

NATHAN:

They're keeping everything hidden, while they strip every living thing off the planet. Are we safe on the island?

GLORIA:

Won't be long before they find us. They're looking for all life forms. So they can squeeze out their possibilities and serve them up for their collective dinner.

NATHAN:

How are we supposed to get away? (BEAT, PRESSES COMMS) I know. I can contact them. Show my warrant card.

GLORIA:

You think that will make the slightest bit of difference? One policeman? They'll eat you along with everyone else.

NATHAN STOPS.

GLORIA:

To the outside universe, Ricosta is closed for business. Down here... well, it's gonna be a feeding frenzy. (BEAT) Nathan, honey. I think I need another phone call.

SCENE 69: EXT. RICOSTA STREET (OUTSIDE MAYOR'S OFFICE)

SONIC BOOM AGAIN. WINDOWS SHATTER. SCREAMS OF PANIC. PEOPLE RUNNING INTO THE STREETS. DOCTOR, ACE, MEL AND MAYOR EXIT OFFICE.

WILDTRACK RICOSTANS:
(SCREAMS OF PANIC)

MAYOR:
(CALLING) Please. There's no need for this.

ATOMON:
(CALLING, OFF, FX) We have your final demand.

MEL:
Look at all those ships! They're huge! They're blotting out the sky! And what's that coming down out of them? Cables? Legs... no...

ACE:
Tentacles... covered in mouths. Just like in the vault. Only now there are loads, they're bigger, and they're everywhere!

DOCTOR:
They're no longer hiding. Things are much worse than we'd imagined.

ATOMON:
(OFF, FX) Mmm. I taste the first of them being absorbed on the ship. Piquant, like a mature cheese. Fear brings a sharpness that is most pleasing to the palate!

DOCTOR RUNS TOWARDS ATOMON.

DOCTOR:
(CALLING) Stop this! Atomon! Tell your people to stop this slaughter!

ACE:
Haven't you got any weapons, Mr Mayor? Where are your police?

MAYOR:
They ran at the first sign of trouble.

ATOMON:
(FX) (LAUGHING) Run, run all you like, people of Ricosta. So many ways. So many choices. These will be sweet. More like a dessert wine.

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(FX, BOOMING FROM ABOVE) Attention Ricosta! Be informed this planet has defaulted on its debt to the Sperovores. All lives now present on this world are assets.

We have declared complete liquidation. With extreme prejudice. Every life can be foreclosed immediately!

Sperovore Investment Holdings have come to collect.

MORE SLITHERING TENTACLES DESCEND FROM SHIPS.

WILDTRACK RICOSTANS:

(DESPERATE SCREAMS OF PANIC)

END OF PART THREE

PART FOUR

REPRISE:

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(FX, BOOMING FROM ABOVE) Attention Ricosta! Be informed this planet has defaulted on its debt to the Sperovores. All lives now present on this world are assets.

We have declared complete liquidation. With extreme prejudice. Every life can be foreclosed immediately!

CROSS TO:

SCENE 70: INT. SECRET HIDEAWAY

DISTANT CARNAGE OF SPEROVORE ATTACKS ON SCREEN

SPEROVORE:

(VIA NEWS MONITOR) Sperovore Investment Holdings have come to collect.

TENTACLES IN THE SEA OUTSIDE.

NATHAN:

(WORKING AT COMMS CONTROLS) All the comms say the same. The ports are locked. Nothing leaving. Nothing coming in.

GLORIA:

Told you. Planetary shielding. Even your police ship's not getting into orbit. Whatever else happens, sweetheart, you're not taking me to lockup today.

NATHAN:

(STOPS USING CONTROLS) I guess not.

GLORIA:

Nathan. Listen. I know you're a cop. I know you've a job to do. But you and me... we worked. We clicked. Those few days we had... Isn't it worth giving 'us' a chance?

NATHAN:

I... don't know.

GLORIA:

You do. You know you do. Look at me. Nathan, sweetie. Just look.

NATHAN:

It's not fair. You know what you do to me when- (GETS KISSED)

GLORIA MOVES IN FOR A SMOOCH.

GLORIA:

(KISSING NATHAN) See. It's still there. (BEAT) And I've got one other thing that might interest you. Something that financial adviser gave me. The number for S.I. HQ. A direct hotline to the boardroom. On one of those ships up there.

NATHAN:

You tried talking. They didn't listen.

GLORIA:

Those were the monkeys. These are the organ-grinders. They want Ricosta locked down and shut up. They don't care about the police. But they do care about an accountant.

NATHAN:

You think you can make a deal?

GLORIA RATTLES HER HANDCUFFS.

GLORIA:

Unlock these cuffs again. Let me give it a try..

SCENE 71: EXT. OUTSIDE MAYOR'S OFFICE

TENTACLES GRABBING PEOPLE.

DOCTOR:

(CALLING) I said stop this! Or do you want me to make you stop? Then you really would regret it.

SONIC SCREWDRIVER BUZZES VERY HIGH PITCHED.

MAYOR:

(CALLING, JUST OFF) Doctor. Don't antagonise them! I thought you said you could help.

ACE:

(HEADING OFF) OK, your police have scarpered. But you must have an armoury, right? Show me, fuzzball.

MEL:

(FOLLOWING) Ace? What are you planning? Wait!

ATOMON:

(FX) Ow. That noise is spoiling my appetite. Who's doing that?

DOCTOR:

I'm disrupting your psychic connection. Not much, but it got your attention.

ATOMON:

(FX) Oh, it's you. The strange one. (CALLING) Sperovore brethren. Wait!

SONIC STOPS. TENTACLES STOP GRABBING PEOPLE.

DOCTOR:

I am willing to negotiate. But you gain nothing unless you stop and listen.

ATOMON:

(FX) Negotiate? With what? We already own this world.

DOCTOR:

I am not of this world. And you should realise by now, I am very valuable indeed.

CROSS TO:

SCENE 72: **EXT. ALONG STREET**

TENTACLES WITHDRAW.

ATOMON:

(OFF, IN STREET) (FX) I will consult the board.

DOCTOR:

(CALLING, OFF IN STREET) Everybody. Stay back! Let me deal with them.

MEL RUNS UP TO ACE AND MAYOR.

MEL:

(CALLING, RUNNING) Ace! Wait. You don't need guns!

MAYOR:

Oh good. I abhor violence!

MEL:

The Doctor's talking to them. But I'm not sure what he's offering.

ACE:

He's doing what he always does. Creating a distraction. Really, Donut. Leave this to me. Actually, forget the armoury. I've had a better idea.

MEL:

What?

ACE:

Don't you see? While big, slimy and ugly is out here. Who's down in the vault?

MEL:

No-one.

ACE:

Exactly. Mr Mayor? You're coming with me.

MAYOR:

Are you sure that's wise?

MEL:

We should probably wait and see what the Doctor-

ACE:

Listen, Donut. Sorry. But I've been doing this a lot, lot longer than you ever did.

MEL:

Ace-

ACE:

It's easy. The monster's out of the vault. The Doctor's keeping it busy so we can get to the TARDIS.

MEL:

And then what? You can't actually fly it. (BEAT) Oh. You think you can?

ACE:

Not just 'think'. I've been having lessons. You stay here, out of trouble. Me and Tufty will go and do the heavy lifting.

MEL:

I've been out there too. Travelling the universe-

ACE:

Yeah. Raking off a tidy profit. Not so much of the saving planets.

MEL:

That's not fair-

ACE:

Leave it to me. Are you in, Mr Mayor?

MAYOR:

I'm all for going anywhere those things aren't. The Vault. It's underground. Secure. Lockable. You've convinced me. But it's all the way across town.

ACE:

Then we'd better get a shift on. (CALLING) Keep an eye on the Doctor, Donut!

MEL:

(TO SELF, ANNOYED) The name is Melanie.

SCENE 73: INT. SECRET ISLAND HIDEAWAY

GLORIA PACING, ON PHONE.

NATHAN:

Are they answering?

GLORIA:

Shh!

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(VIA PHONE, FX) Miss Swannicker. A pleasure. I hear you're down on Ricosta. Mmm. Delightfully spicy so far.

SPEROVORES MURMURS OF AGREEMENT IN B/G

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(VIA PHONE, FX) We're all enjoying them very much here in the boardroom.

GLORIA:

Riiiiight. (BEAT) That's my issue, you see. I'm here, but I'm not a resident asset. I'd like to enquire after some kind of exit.

SPEROVORE:

(VIA PHONE, FX) I see.

GLORIA:

Check my records. You'll see I've brought you many, many lucrative prospects in the past. And I hope to continue to do so in the future, so long as I remain alive enough to achieve that end.

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(VIA PHONE, FX) That is an impressive record, Miss Swannicker.

GLORIA:

Please, call me Gloria.

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(VIA PHONE, FX) Hold one moment.

NATHAN:

What are they saying?

GLORIA:

(TO NATHAN) Shh! I'm trying to create a sense of empathy.

CROSS TO:

SCENE 74: INT. SPEROVORE SHIP, BOARDROOM (CONTINUOUS)

GLOOPY B/G. SPEROVORE FEEDING NOISES, OFF.

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(FX) Hello, Gloria? I see from our records everything you say is true.

GLORIA:

(VIA PHONE) Of course.

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(FX) Your psychic spoor indicates a very decisive personality.

GLORIA:

(D) I am. (BEAT) Wait... You're keeping track of my quantum trace?

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(FX) Of course. We never know when we'll need to cash in any of our associates. Hmm. Possibility trails such as yours aren't always the best eating... So we can weigh that alongside potential future business.

SPEROVORE ACTIVATES GLOOPY COMPUTER CONTROLS UNDER FOLLOWING. READOUTS PRINTING.

GLORIA:

(D) Then I've every confidence this will come out in my favour. (BEAT) Well?

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(FX) S. I. Holdings computers say... 'yes'. You can be released. But-

GLORIA:

(D) There had to be a 'but'.

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(FX) A down-payment would expedite your exit. To an immediate priority.

GLORIA:

(D) Down-payment? OK. I'll... call you right back.

PHONE HANGS UP. DIAL TONE.

SCENE 75: EXT. STREET

DOCTOR APPROACHES ATOMON. TENACLES SLITHER UNDER FOLLOWING.

DOCTOR:

So much more pleasant than our last meeting. A little more airy. Now, we haven't been properly introduced. I'm the Doctor.

ATOMON:

(FX) 'Doctor', you say? Well, then – you know a short pause between courses aids digestion. Please. Amuse us. What is your proposal?

DOCTOR:

What will it take for you to leave this world alone?

ATOMON:

(FX) Hmm. We will commune, check the accounts. We have been propping up the economy of this planet for a very long time.

MEL:

(APPROACHING) I think you can afford it. Several galaxies would need to go bust before you'd even notice a dent.

DOCTOR:

Mel. I told everyone to stay back.

MEL:

You should remember, Doctor. I don't always do what I'm told.

ATOMON:

(FX) Ah yes. This one. Melanie Bush. She is also in our ledgers.

DOCTOR:

Really?

ATOMON:

(FX) She is of exceptional value.

DOCTOR:

Every life is of exceptional value, Atomon.

ATOMON:

(FX) But Miss Bush. She has the scent of many realities, many different universes. (SNIFFING) What an aroma. Intoxicating.

MEL:

Charmed, I'm sure.

ATOMON:

(FX) How was this achieved?

DOCTOR:

If you don't know, then I'm not at liberty to say.

ATOMON:

(FX) No matter. Mr Glitz has already used up several of her alternative futures to extend his line of credit.

DOCTOR:

He's done what?

MEL:

My 'futures'?

ATOMON:

(FX) Of course, some of those futures are now past. I understand humans see them in dreams. Our representatives visited you while you slept.

MEL:

Hyper-jumps! I knew we didn't need to go into cryo-sleep every single time! Why, that no-good, self-serving, manipulating-

DOCTOR:

(INTERRUPTS) Mel. What's done is done. Or rather never-will-have-been done.

ATOMON:

(FX) Yes. She has many futures. We could absorb her now. Devour every future except one. That would offset a considerable amount of the debt...

MEL:

What would that leave me with? Which future?

ATOMON:

(FX) The one where you are dead. (LAUGHS)

SCENE 76: EXT. RICOSTA STREETS

ACE AND MAYOR HURRY ALONG DESERTED STREETS. BUILDING AND VEHICLE ALARMS GOING OFF IN DISTANCE. TENTACLES GLOOPING IN THE AIR.

ACE:

Look at it. Those tentacles have wrecked the place. Now they're all just hanging there. Waiting.

MAYOR:

Ricosta was such a beautiful world.

ACE:

You're the one who asked the gangsters to move in.

MAYOR:

It worked so well, for a while. It's a paradise. People were happy to spend. Then the financial crisis came. Our debts were called in. Sperovore Holdings offered to bail us out.

ACE:

I'll bet they did. So they could set up their very own kitchen with *foie gras* on tap.

MAYOR:

I have faced many criminals in my time. None have scared me quite so much as you, Miss Ace.

ACE:

I'll take that as a compliment. OK, this is the plan. Find the TARDIS. Take it to the Doctor. Then we save your planet. And your tail stays where it is. Deal?

MAYOR:

Deal.

THEY HURRY ON.

SCENE 77: INT. SECRET ISLAND HIDEAWAY

GLORIA CHECKING COMPUTERS, TAPPING KEYS. BEEPS ON SCREEN.

NATHAN:
What are you doing now?

GLORIA:
Emergency accounts. My rainy day money. No. No! It can't be!

NATHAN:
What?

GLORIA:
That dirty, double-crossing, low-down rat!

NATHAN:
Who?

GLORIA:
Glitz. He's emptied them. He must have used some hacker to get in. And his rainy day has already come.

NATHAN:
He's robbed you?

GLORIA:
Me... and Lefty. Everything, siphoned off into Nosferatu's accounts.

NATHAN:
You can't go back to the Sperovores with nothing.

GLORIA:
I'm not beaten yet. Oh no. You've got special police codes, haven't you? To look into dodgy banking.

NATHAN:
Yes... I've been tracking Lefty's funds.

GLORIA TYPES AGAIN.

GLORIA:
Then give them to me. We follow the money... We follow my money!

SCENE 78: **EXT. RICOSTAN STREET**

DOCTOR AND MEL WALK A SHORT WAY FROM ATOMON.

MEL:

The Sperovores are willing to take me, and let this planet go.

DOCTOR:

They've given us time to think it over. But it's not for me to make that choice. I'd never give you up, Mel. But I don't feel I know you any more.

MEL:

What? How can you think that?

DOCTOR:

What else am I supposed to think? So many lives placed in danger. All for the pursuit of money.

MEL:

You've got the wrong end of the stick, Doctor. Really, you have.

DOCTOR:

What happened to Melanie Jane Bush from Pease Pottage? With her moral compass that never wavered?

MEL:

Are you the same person you always were? (BEAT) After you regenerated, well, I thought you were sweet, funny. So different from what you were before – but still the same. But now... Is your 'moral compass' still working?

DOCTOR:

Of course, but-

MEL:

Then so's mine. It's working perfectly.

DOCTOR:

Mel, I-

MEL:

I need you to be quiet, Doctor. I need you to listen.

SCENE 79: INT. SECRET HIDEAWAY

GLORIA TAPPING KEYS.

GLORIA:

Nothing. No credits whatsoever. Everywhere the same signature code. The hacker's backdoor. An address, 'Pease Pottage'.
(BEAT) It's her. She did it. She's robbed me blind! Every last penny!

NATHAN:

Who did?

GLORIA:

Melanie Bush!

THROWS COMPUTER TERMINAL ACROSS ROOM.

NATHAN:

Gloria. Calm down-

GLORIA:

(FURIOUS) Quiet! I'm thinking!

SMASHES ANOTHER COMPUTER AGAINST WALL.

GLORIA:

Wait. There is something else. Something I can offer. Not strictly mine. But I do have a key. In my purse! I didn't give it back!

SCRABBLES IN PURSE.

NATHAN:

A key? (PENNY DROPS) Oh, riiight. But it's in the Vault. How will we get past the tentacles and back to the mainland?

GLORIA:

Don't worry. Once the Sperovores know exactly what's on the table, they'll have us there in a flash.

SCENE 80: EXT. RICOSTAN STREET

MEL:

When I left, I think you hoped I'd get Glitz on the straight and narrow. So did I. But he's too much of a recidivist to change. He's committed to his life of crime. That's the only honest thing about him!

DOCTOR:

I should never have let you go-

MEL:

Quiet, Doctor! Instead, I did the only thing I could. I did what you'd do. Every time we left a place, I made sure we left it better than we'd found it. Whatever scheme, whatever con Glitz was running, he'd pay his takings into his dodgy accounts. Only he hadn't the slightest clue that I'd already hacked them. That I made sure those funds - and more - went back to help the helpless. Feed the hungry. Home the homeless.

DOCTOR:

Oh, Mel...

MEL:

I'm still talking! It was the same here. Who do you think informed the Ricostan police about the robbery? I didn't buy Gloria's story for a second. I wanted to get the bad guys locked away so I could look after the TARDIS, until you - the real you - turned up. Because I know you always do.

DOCTOR:

And I'm here. Now.

MEL:

Are you? My Doctor believed in me. Why don't you? No trust, no faith, no confidence. You're questioning me? Perhaps you're the imposter after all.

DOCTOR:

I'm sorry, Mel. I'm sorry.

ATOMON SLITHERS OVER.

ATOMON:

Have you finished?

MEL:

Yes. Yes we have. (WALKING BACK OVER TO ATOMON) You can take me, Atomon. I'll give myself up if it means this planet can live.

SCENE 81: INT. VAULT

FOOSTEPS IN VAULT AS ACE AND MAYOR ENTER.

ACE:

Coast is clear.

MAYOR:

Are you sure this is wise?

ACE:

Giving the Doctor his mojo back? It's always wise.

CRACKS AND RENDING METAL AS TENTACLES BREAK THROUGH ROOF.

MAYOR:

You said it was empty!

ACE:

I said the coast was clear. I didn't know they'd be coming through the roof!

MAYOR:

Not just the roof. Look! Teleports!

TELEPORT BEAM AS GLORIA AND NATHAN ARRIVE. TENTACLES THRASH.

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(FX) This is the object?

GLORIA:

The Doctor's TARDIS, yes! Thanks for the ride.

ACE:

What the-

GLORIA:

Stop right there! Or my tentacled friend will squish you.

NATHAN:

Sorry Ace. We're gonna have to take this box.

GLORIA:

It's our collateral. Our ticket out of here.

ACE:

It's not yours!

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(FX) Why are they here? Is this an attempt at deception?

GLORIA:

No! You know me. I always play straight down the line with Sperovore Financial. It doesn't pay me to do anything else.

MAYOR:

Please. I want no part of this. Can I leave?

GLORIA:

This one. He's the one you've an argument with. He messed up this world. Have an appetiser on me.

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(FX) Ricostan.

MAYOR:

Y-yes?

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(FX) You have governed your world recklessly. Without thought for prudence and austerity. I find such financial mismanagement offensive in the extreme. Liquidate.

TENTACLES GRAB MAYOR. SUCKING PSYCHIC ABSORPTION.

MAYOR:

Aaaaggh!

ACE RUNS TO TARDIS AND UNLOCKS IT.

ACE:

Quick! Get in! Both of you!

ACE, GLORIA AND NATHAN RUSH INTO TARDIS.

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(FX) Engage matter transporter. These co-ordinates. Bring the asset to our ship.

TELEPORT BEAM HUMS AROUND TARDIS AND ZAPS IT AWAY.

SCENE 82: INT. SPEROVORE SHIP

GLOOPY SHIP B/G. ZAP AS MATTER TRANSPORTER BRINGS TARDIS AND SPEROVORE BANKER ON BOARD.

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(FX) Call the auditors. They can assess its worth. Miss Swannicker made great claims for it.

SPEROVORE SLITHERS OFF.

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(FX) I sense something... tantalising in the air around it. Flavours beyond our experience.

SPEROVORES:

(FX, PSYCHIC MURMURS OF AGREEMENT)

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(FX) I will be in the boardroom. Digesting.

SCENE 83: INT. TARDIS

ACE:

What are you doing? Handing over the TARDIS to that bunch of slimeballs?

GLORIA:

We were getting off this world. We were on our way until you messed it up.

NATHAN:

Sorry Ace.

ACE:

Nathan? You're in on this too? I thought you were one of the good guys. (BEAT) Oh no. I know that doe-eyed look. She's got her claws into you, hasn't she?

GLORIA:

(SIGH) Petty jealousies aside-

ACE:

Oh, I'm not jealous. Just very, very annoyed.

GLORIA:

That aside - we should go out there and talk to them. They know me.

ACE:

And in the five minutes I've spent with you, I think I do too. You'd sell your own granny to save your skin. So I don't give much for our chances.

NATHAN:

Gotta say, Gloria. I'm inclined to agree with Ace.

GLORIA:

You don't trust me either? Fine.

NATHAN:

What else can we do?

ACE:

First things first. Let's look outside.

ACE ACTIVATES TARDIS MONITOR.

NATHAN:

Is that their ship? Eurgh.

ACE:

Looks like we're alone. For now. I'm guessing we won't have long before they call in their specialist time-spaceship assessors.

GLORIA:

What are you proposing?

ACE:

We hit those slimy squid where it hurts. Find their control centre and blow it up.

GLORIA:

What with? I don't happen to carry kilos of explosive around with me wherever I go.

ACE PULLS OUT CRATE FULL OF NITRO-9 CANISTERS.

ACE:

(EFFORT) See. Now that's where you're going wrong, right off the bat.

CHUCKS ONE TO NATHAN.

ACE:

It's called Nitro-Nine, pretty-boy. Catch.

NATHAN:

(REACTS) Uh!

SCENE 84: INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE

DOCTOR AND MEL ENTER. SLITHERING AS ATOMON FOLLOWS.

ATOMON:

(FX) The Mayor has been commoditised. We can use his office to finalise the deal.

MEL:

Commoditised? Does that mean-

DOCTOR:

I'm rather afraid it does.

ATOMON:

(FX, SMACKS LIPS) Fast food. Never satisfying. My people are preparing the paperwork.

MEL:

Couldn't you have just killed me anyway?

DOCTOR:

That's the difference between crisps and caviar.

ATOMON:

(FX) Such a wealth of potential... willingly given. We can marinade you in every possibility. A rainbow of flavours that could sustain us for months. My ligula are moistening at the merest anticipation...

DOCTOR:

Are you sure, Mel?

MEL:

One life for many. I don't have grey areas. Things are black and white. The right and the wrong thing to do.

DOCTOR:

It is you. You haven't changed a bit. (BEAT) I can't allow it, you know.

MEL:

If you know I'm me, then you know it's pointless arguing. I'm as stubborn as they come.

ATOMON:

(FX) Ready, girl? Are you prepared for death? In all its myriad possibilities?

DOCTOR:

No.

MEL:

Doctor, we don't have any choice. Not if we want to save the planet.

DOCTOR:

We do have a choice. Atomon. I'm offering you a new menu.

SCENE 85: INT. SPEROVORE SHIP, CONTROL ROOM

ACE, GLORIA & NATHAN PLANT THE LAST CANISTER OF NITRO. ACE SETS TIMER.

ACE:

That's it. Timer set to blow in three minutes.

GLORIA:

Now what?

THEY CREEP TOWARDS DOORWAY.

ACE:

We get back down that corridor, into the TARDIS and disappear.

NATHAN:

You really can fly that thing?

ACE:

I keep telling everyone. I've had lessons.

SLITHERING TENTACLES APPROACH

NATHAN:

Uh-oh. Sperovore. Right outside and in the way.

SPEROVORE AUDITOR:

(FX, APPROACHING) What are you? The aroma is familiar. Exotic. We tasted something similar very recently.

SCENE 86: INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE

ATOMON:

What, Doctor? What can you offer to match Melanie Bush?

DOCTOR:

Something of mine. Something I've been protecting all the while I've been here.

MEL:

No, Doctor.

DOCTOR:

In exchange for Mel. I can give you - my TARDIS.

MEL:

Doctor - you can't!

DOCTOR:

It's the very least I can do. To make up for doubting you.

MEL:

Please. There must be another way.

DOCTOR:

No. If you want quantum possibilities, the TARDIS can feed you all forever.

ATOMON:

(CHUCKLING) We cannot take it.

DOCTOR:

Have I said something amusing?

ATOMON:

(FX) We cannot take it from you. Because we already have it.

DOCTOR:

Oh no... (REALISATION) Ace!

SCENE 87: INT. SPEROVORE SHIP, CORRIDOR OUTSIDE CONTROL ROOM

TENTACLES SLITHERING ALONG CORRIDOR

SPEROVORE AUDITOR:

(FX) I was asked to assess a vessel. Not 'creatures'. Why were you in that control room?

NATHAN:

What now, Ace?

ACE:

Nothing else for it. Can't go round. Gotta go through!
(LAUNCHES HERSELF AT SPEROVORE) Lucky it's a tiddler! Get to the TARDIS!

ACE AND SPEROVORE STRUGGLE. NATHAN RUNS PAST.

SPEROVORE AUDITOR:

(FX) Euurgh! I am not used to handling 'produce'!

NATHAN:

Hurry up, Ace. Gloria! Come on!

GLORIA:

(NOT MOVING) She's gonna get us all killed.

NATHAN:

(JUST OFF) Gloria! This way. Back to the TARDIS.

GLORIA:

Hello, Mr Sperovore? My name is Gloria Swannicker. You may have heard of me.

SPEROVORE AUDITOR:

(STRUGGLING, FX) We are invaded! Brethren! Come!!

ACE:

You like eating? Chomp on this, barnacle-features.

ACE SLAMS A NITRO NINE INTO SPEROVORE'S MOUTH.

SPEROVORE AUDITOR:

(FX) Mmmmmph. Tangy. Metallic.

MUFFLED WHUMP OF EXPLOSION INSIDE.

SPEROVORE AUDITOR:

(FX) Aaaargh! It burns!

MORE SPEROVORES ARRIVE. SLITHERING TENACLES.

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(FX) What is going on here? This is most unseemly. (CRIES OUT)
What is that disgusting taste we are sharing?

ACE:

Nitro-Nine! You're debt-collectors, right? (EFFORT) Here's that
sick squid I owe you!

ACE CHUCKS SPEROVORE AUDITOR INTO OTHERS. SHE RUNS ON.

ACE:

(JUST OFF) Come on, you two!

GLORIA:

(BACKING AWAY) Listen, they're nothing to do with me. (BACKING
INTO CONTROL ROOM) Never even met them before I came on board.

NATHAN RUNS TOWARDS GLORIA.

NATHAN:

Gloria! Get out of the control room!

HE GRABS HER.

GLORIA:

(REACTS)

NATHAN:

The timer, remember! (EFFORT)

NATHAN SHOVES GLORIA CLEAR INTO CORRIDOR.

GLORIA:

(CRIES OUT)

SPEROVORE BANKER:

You! Stop there! You are familiar. Have we tasted you before?

TENTACLE GRABS NATHAN'S LEG. SPEROVORE ABSORPTION FEEDING
STARTS.

ACE:

(JUST OFF) Nathan!

NATHAN:

It's got my leg! Aaaagh! (DISTORTED SCREAMS UNDER)

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(FX) Mmm. A familiar tang.

EXPLOSION.

ACE:

No!

CROSS TO:

SCENE 88: INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE

ATOMON:

(CRIES IN PAIN, FX) I sense... Euuurghh!

MEL:

What's happening?

DOCTOR:

It's not just the TARDIS they've got.

ATOMON:

(FX) Pain. Disturbance... Explosions!

DOCTOR:

Ace is there, too!

TARDIS STARTS SHAKY MATERIALISATION, OUTSIDE.

MEL:

Isn't that-

DOCTOR:

Or she was. (RUNNING FOR DOOR) Outside, Mel. Now!

CROSS TO:

SCENE 89: EXT. RICTOSTAN STREET (CONTINUOUS)

TARDIS MATERIALISATION COMPLETES. DOCTOR AND MEL RUN OUTSIDE.

MEL:

It's here! She really can fly it.

DOCTOR:

She can, when the TARDIS wants her to. It's what else she might have done that worries me...

TARDIS DOORS BURST OPEN, ACE STUMBLES OUT.

ACE:

Doctor!

DOCTOR:

What do you think you're doing, Ace?

ATOMON:

(CRIES IN PAIN, FX)

ATOMON CRASHES THROUGH WALL OF MAYOR'S OFFICE ONTO STREET. DANGLING TENTACLES WRITHE IN SKIES.

SPEROVORES:

(CRIES IN PAIN, FX)

ATOMON:

(FX) Pain... Poison!

MEL:

Is this all your handiwork, Ace? What happened?

ACE:

Never mind the monsters. You've got to help us. It's Nathan. He's hurt. Badly hurt.

DOCTOR:

Come on Mel. We need you.

DOCTOR, MEL AND ACE HURRY INTO TARDIS.

SCENE 90: INT. TARDIS

TARDIS ALARMS. DOCTOR RUSHES TO CONSOLE.

DOCTOR:

Temporal buffers. Burnt out. Ah, but that's not the real problem is it?

MEL RUSHES TO NATHAN.

NATHAN:

(MOANS, CONTINUING UNDER)

MEL:

Doctor. This poor man. He's...

ACE:

He was caught in an explosion. Up on the ship. Can we do something?

MEL:

I'll check medical. (RUNNING OFF) Is it still in the same place?

DOCTOR:

Yes, Mel!

ACE:

Doctor. Can't you leave the controls? Nathan's dying. It's all my fault.

DOCTOR:

(COMING OVER) No. The TARDIS has been itching to sort this out since before she arrived. That's why we got here early. The poor old thing was confused.

ACE:

What do you mean?

SONIS SCREWDRIVER BUZZ.

DOCTOR:

This man can't die. Not yet. And it's not exactly your fault, Ace. It's causality. You're simply Time's unwitting agent. (CHECKS READINGS) Yes... I see it now. Like a Magic Eye picture. Stare long enough at what's in front of you, and it all falls into place.

MEL RETURNS WITH MEDICAL KIT.

MEL:

I brought what I could find.

ATOMON:

(OUTSIDE, FX) Aaaagh! Doctor! What is happening to us!

DOCTOR:

Stabilise him. Something's wrong with our alien gourmets.

ACE:

Nathan's dying here.

MEL:

Surely a touch of indigestion for the Sperovores can wait!

DOCTOR:

No. I need to see them. I'm afraid their last meal disagreed with them. It's disagreeing with the entire cosmos.

SCENE 91: **EXT. RICOSTAN STREETS**

DOCTOR EXITS TARDIS.

DOCTOR:
Atomon! A word!

TENTACLES WRITHING IN SKY. SPEROVORES MOANING IN PAIN.

ATOMON:
(FX) What is happening? We are poisoned...

SPEROVORE:
(MOANING IN AGONY, FX) Infected... Diseased!

DOCTOR:
There's someone in my ship in need of urgent medical attention.

ATOMON:
(FX) So are we!

DOCTOR:
I need to leave and save his life. The right side of his body has been severely traumatised. That's just the physical damage. He has mental scars too – partial absorption by your brethren has shredded his memories.

ATOMON:
(FX) I do not care! (MOANS IN PAIN)

DOCTOR:
Well, you should! This man cannot die because he's already lived.

ATOMON:
What?

DOCTOR:
Nathan Later is Lefty Lonnigan. Or will be. But only if I set time back on the right course.

ATOMON:
The potential... we cannot absorb a potential that never was...

DOCTOR:
While his fate hangs in the balance, you are all victims of reality poisoning. A toxic paradox. One of your own making.

MEL EXITS TARDIS.

MEL:

Doctor. Nathan's fading fast! We need to get him somewhere. A hospital!

DOCTOR:

And I know which one. First, I need the planet shield raised. And the population freed.

ATOMON:

(FX) No. They are ours...

DOCTOR:

Because if you don't, you have one future. And only one.

ATOMON:

(FX) This... This is impossible...

DOCTOR:

Not when you have a time machine. If Nathan dies, so do you all. Perhaps I should just let it happen.

MEL:

Doctor!

DOCTOR:

All right, Mel. We'll go. But first, they leave this planet alone!

ATOMON:

(FX, IN PAIN) I will commune... with the board.

DOCTOR:

I suggest you commune quickly.

SCENE 92: INT. SPEROVORE SHIP, BOARDROOM

SICK-SOUNDING GLOOPY B/G. GLORIA STUMBLES IN.

GLORIA:

What's going on? What's wrong with you?

SPEROVORES:

(FX) Poison... Poison... Agree... Agree!

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(FX) The agreement is ratified! We agree!

GLORIA:

What agreement?

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(FX, STARTING TO RECOVER) What are you doing here?

GLORIA:

Me... Oh nothing. Really. Nothing at all. An accounting anomaly, but it's all sorted out. If I could just impose for a ride to somewhere less... doomed.

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(FX) Ricosta is reprieved.

GLORIA:

Sorry?

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(FX) We have reviewed the planetary debt situation and are prepared to offer an extension.

GLORIA:

Really?

SPEROVORE BANKER:

(FX) We have sufficient power to transfer you to Ricostan customs. Then we will be taking a business sabbatical. To recover.

GLORIA:

Customs? In that case, one more thing. I couldn't ask for a small loan?

SCENE 93: EXT. RICOSTAN STREETS

SPEROVORE COMMUNICATION HUM.

ATOMON:

(FX) We agree Doctor! We agree to your terms.

DOCTOR:

An absolute displeasure doing business with you.

DOCTOR ENTERS TARDIS. DOORS CLOSE. DEMATERIALISATION STARTS.

ATOMON:

(FX) We depart. Sperovore brethren! Return me! We must be cured!

TENTACLES RETRACT. ATOMON BEAMS BACK TO SHIP.

WILDTRACK RICOSTANS:

(CRIES OF RELIEF) They're going!/ We're saved!

RUMBLING AS SPEROVORE SHIPS DEPART FROM SKIES.

SCENE 94: INT. FUTURISTIC HOSPITAL

FADE UP BEEPS OF LIFE SUPPORT.

MEL:

This is the right place. The Krytomp Bio-Infirmary.

DOCTOR:

In the Golden Dragon Nebula. One of the wealthiest sectors in the galaxy. Rich pickings for anyone with criminal leanings.

NATHAN:

(MOANS)

DOCTOR:

But is it the right ward? Ace, who's in the next bed?

ACE:

It's empty. (WALKING OVER) But there's a chart. (PICKS UP CHART) Says he's in surgery... Ohhh.

MEL:

Let me see... (TAKING CHART) An accident on a stolen hoverscooter... Ohhh.

DOCTOR:

And the name on the chart: (TAKING CHART) Sabalom Glitz. Good.

MEL:

Gloria said they'd known each other a long time.

DOCTOR:

We're about to condemn Mr Later to a life of crime. One we know ends very badly.

ACE:

But at least he gets to live. It's the way the universe runs. We've got to do it. Haven't we? (BEAT) Bilge-bag and Lefty, twenty years younger.

DOCTOR:

We all change over time...

MEL:

I've prepaid Nathan's account. Courtesy of S.I. Holdings. The consultant says he needs lots of prosthetics.

DOCTOR:

We've seen them. (PICKING UP NATHAN'S CHART) The name on his chart's blank. Let's fill it in, shall we?

MEL:

Are you allowed to do that?

DOCTOR:

I am a Doctor. (WRITING) 'Nathan... Lonnigan.' (PUTS DOWN CHART)
Come along. Both of you.

ACE:

Later, Later.

SCENE 95: INT. SPEROVORE SHIP

GLOOPING B/G RETURNING TO NORMAL.

DOCTOR:

(VIA COMMS) I'm pleased to see you've left orbit.

ATOMON:

(FX) You have saved the Sperovore race. The board is grateful, Doctor.

DOCTOR:

(D) I didn't do it for you. If your financial structures collapse it would cause untold misery across hundreds of worlds. Sometimes, you have to save the monsters too.

ATOMON:

(FX) We are reviewing our investments. A more circumspect view may be needed. Some control of our... appetites.

DOCTOR:

(D) Yes. You never know when you might come across another paradox. Especially if I'm anywhere in the vicinity. Over and out.

COMMS CUT OUT. SPEROVORE SHIP FLIES ON.

SCENE 96: INT. TARDIS

TARDIS IN FLIGHT B/G.

MEL:

Erm. Doctor, did you ask about my debt?

ACE:

We don't tend to think about money.

DOCTOR:

I'm sure it will all be ancient history soon enough. Well done, Mel. As for you, Ace...

ACE:

What about me?

DOCTOR:

I'll speak to you about rash decisions later. Once I've made sure there are no further repercussions.

ACE:

But-

DOCTOR:

(USING CONTROLS) First, I need to put Mel's old room back where we can find it. Though I suspect the TARDIS may already have it to hand.

ACE:

What do you mean?

DOCTOR:

Our last few trips. The sentimental old thing's been following in Mel's footsteps! She must have thought we needed her.

ACE:

The TARDIS was doing all the steering? But I thought-

MEL:

You've been looking for me! Without even realising?

DOCTOR:

And now we've found you. Follow me, Mel! (EXITS INTO CORRIDOR, WHISTLING 'PEASE POTTAGE HOT')

MEL:

Isn't it great? The old gang back together? (FOLLOWS DOCTOR)
Doctor! Wait for me!

ACE:

(UNIMPRESSED) Yeah. Just great.

SCENE 97: INT. SHUTTLE

RYANAIR OF SPACE TRAVEL. CRYING CHILD.

GLORIA:

Excuse me! Isn't there a better seat than this?

STEWARD APPROACHES IN AISLE.

STEWARD:

Sorry madam. Miss-

GLORIA:

Swannicker. Gloria Swannicker. If you check my loyalty points-

STEWARD:

I'm afraid First class and business are full.

GLORIA:

Look. I've got cash-

STEWARD:

We're not allowed to do that. Would Madam like an economy meal?

GLORIA:

No. Thank you.

STEWARD:

Then please fasten your safety belt. We're about to depart.

CLUNK OF TROLLEY. CHILD CRIES LOUDER. SHUTTLE RATTLES AS IT MOVES OFF.

GLORIA:

(TO SELF) I'll be back. Back in a better seat. A better life. Once I track you down, and take back what I'm owed. Miss Melanie Bush.

THE END